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FIRST THINGS

OCTOBER 1998 • Number 86

CORRESPONDENCE 2 — Arguing for life; gays marrying; Emerson; Dorothy Day's legacy; more thoughts on Babel; thee, thou, and "you all"; religion and the American founders; Dutch bishops and the Holocaust; speaking truth to power; a word from *New Oxford Review*

THIS TIME 12 — *James Nuechterlein* The Lutheran Prospect

OPINION 14
Sarah E. Hinlicky Subversive Virginity
M. D. Aeschliman C. S. Lewis on Mere Science
Robert Lowry Clinton Neocons vs. Theocons, Again

ARTICLES

21 *William A. Dembski* Science and Design

28 *Ralph C. Wood* In Defense of Disbelief

REVIEW ESSAY 34 — *Thomas F. X. Noble* Popes for All Seasons

BOOKS 42

Robert W. Jenson — Systematic Theology, Vol. 3, by Wolfhart Pannenberg
John Peter Kenney — The Dying of the Light by James Tunstead Burtchaell
James Tunstead Burtchaell — All the Essential Half-Truths About Higher Education by George Dennis O'Brien
Luke Timothy Johnson — The Human Christ by Charlotte Allen
David Novak — Abraham Joshua Heschel: Prophetic Witness by Edward K. Kaplan & Samuel H. Dresner
Gilbert Meilaender — Human Cloning: Religious Responses edited by Ronald Cole-Turner
Robert Louis Wilken — From the Holy Mountain: A Journey Among the Christians of the Middle East by William Dalrymple
Scott McConnell — Someone Else's House by Tamar Jacoby; . . . *and* Briefly Noted

THE PUBLIC SQUARE 80 — A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life
Richard John Neuhaus
This Month: Setback in Rome, *etc.*
Poetry by *J. Bottum* (20), *Marjorie Maddox* (27), *Laurance Wieder* (79)

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Arguing for Life

Although Paul Swope ought to be commended for his interest in better communicating the pro-life message ("Abortion: A Failure to Communicate," April), I believe his essay is flawed in at least two ways.

First, Mr. Swope is mistaken in thinking that Americans in general have accepted the pro-life view that the unborn are fully human even though they still support legalized abortion. It is true that polling data have consistently shown that a vast majority of people see abortion as wrong, even morally wrong. But in public discourse they relegate abortion to a question of personal preference, something they do not do when it comes to behaviors they consider seriously wrong, such as spousal and child abuse, torture, and human slavery. For example, imagine the public's reaction to a politician who said the following: "I am 'personally opposed' to owning a slave and torturing my spouse, but if someone thought it consistent with his 'deeply held beliefs' to engage in such behaviors it would be wrong for me to try to force my beliefs on that person." A person having said that would be considered a moral monster. Yet such language is perfectly acceptable when discussing abortion.

Second, one can question whether the research cited by Mr. Swope is an example of good social science, and whether the inferences he draws from this data are justified. The study cited by Mr. Swope "suggests that women do not see any 'good' resulting from unplanned pregnancy. Instead they must weigh what they perceive as three 'evils,' namely, motherhood, adoption, and abortion." Mr. Swope, however, does not entertain the possibility that because these women almost always choose to kill their fetuses rather than their already born children (if they have any) he is mistaken that they "know" their fetuses are fully human.

Yet Mr. Swope confidently infers from this study that "the pro-life movement's own self-chosen slogans and educational presentations have tended to exacerbate the problem, as they focus almost exclusively on the unborn child, not the mother. This tends to build resentment, not sympathy, particularly among women of child-bearing age." Mr. Swope cites numerous statistics to prove that his approach, which emphasizes appealing to the pregnant woman's self-interest, "works." However, I believe Swope's statistical case is flawed in at least three ways.

(1) Mr. Swope does not have counterfactual knowledge of how the world would have been if the pro-life movement had not emphasized fetal humanity from its genesis. Perhaps his approach seems to work because the pro-life movement's emphasis on fetal humanity has helped impede a worse situation.

(2) Even if Mr. Swope's approach "works" in reducing the number of abortions, it does not follow that our culture is becoming pro-life. His emphasis on appealing to the pregnant woman's self-interest (rather than her moral obligation not to kill her own child) in order to persuade her not to have an abortion may result in nurturing the type of mentality that makes abortion more acceptable even though it may become (for a time) rarer in practice. After all, there are some cases where abortion may benefit the pregnant woman. Mr. Swope has no principled argument against that sort of abortion.

Nurturing an unprincipled self-interested culture is not my idea of becoming more pro-life, for it may have the unfortunate consequence of increasing the number of people who think that unless their needs

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are satisfied they are perfectly justified in performing homicide on the most vulnerable of our population.

(3) Because Mr. Swope admits that women who have abortions oftentimes rationalize what they are doing, how can he trust these women to give an adequate assessment of their own reasons for the abortions he admits are the result of the perverse deliberations of self-interested moral agents?

Mr. Swope is right that we should do more than stress the humanity of the unborn, but we should not do less. In my judgment, there are three things that must be done in order to facilitate cultural change. First, we must persuade our fellow citizens that the unborn are full members of the human community. Second, we must show that if the unborn are human persons, one cannot be "pro-choice" on abortion and at the same time maintain that the unborn are fully human, just as one cannot be pro-choice on slavery and at the same time say that slaves are human persons. Third, we must show, both in word and in deed, that living virtuously and not autonomously is the essence of the moral life. Mr. Swope seems to stress autonomy, the first principle of the abortion culture, rather than virtue, the moral goal of the Gospel of Life.

In conclusion, we should never forget that the reason why many women suffer from abortion is because abortion is a serious moral wrong, the killing of an innocent human person. Abortion is not a serious moral wrong because the woman suffers. Suffering may or may not accompany the committing of a serious moral wrong, and sometimes suffering accompanies that which is morally obligatory or has no moral aspect whatsoever. When, in the name of helping women, we downplay the serious moral wrong of abortion we patronize the same women we are trying to help, treating them as less than moral agents.

This is not to say that the pro-life movement should not be in the forefront of providing alternatives to abortion so that abortion will become rare. It should and it has. But we must never forget why we are providing alternatives: abortion is a serious moral wrong that kills one life and because of that scars another.

Francis J. Beckwith
Associate Professor of Philosophy, Culture, and Law
Trinity International University
California Campus

I'm not surprised by the results Paul Swope describes in "Abortion: A Failure to Communicate." The rhetoric that resonates with most people is the rhetoric of feeling. Liberals understand this but conservatives are just learning. It's interesting that several of the ads end with "Think about it." If we can just get people to think, the battle for moral sanity will be nearly won.

Ralph Gillmann
Burke,VA

Paul Swope replies:

I am reminded of the famous line in *My Fair Lady*, "Why can't a woman be more like a man?" Indeed, why can't women be more like Professor Beckwith? I very much agree with Prof. Beckwith's pro-life convictions, including his trenchant analysis of the moral myopia of our culture. However, I would suggest his comments may display a lack of sensitivity to the difference between moral argumentation and personal persuasion.

If a woman stands on the ledge of a twenty-story apartment building about to jump, believing that this act will end her pain and despair and thus be somehow in her "best interest," how should I respond? Should I read to her from the code of canon law about the objective moral sin of suicide? Am I caving in to her lower tendencies and "nurturing an unprincipled self-interested culture" by instead reaching out to her in compassion, hearing her fears and gently speaking to her of a better self, of hope for her future? The ads of the Caring Foun-

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dation do not appeal to raw selfishness, nor do they violate pro-life principles; they simply urge women to listen to their own voice of conscience, and to see the choice of motherhood as more courageous than the choice of abortion. This more "woman-centered" approach has also been adopted by most crisis pregnancy centers, who clearly have the best interests of the woman and child at heart.

My article stated clearly that other pro-life approaches, such as teaching fetal development, are not to be abandoned. In fact, it is a lack of sophistication in varying our message to suit different audiences and objectives that has handicapped our movement. A thirty-second ad with the objective of reaching women of childbearing age is simply not the place to teach about abstract moral obligations. I passionately wish that all Americans shared my and Prof. Beckwith's embrace of moral absolutes, but given the facts to the contrary, we should utilize whatever positive and persuasive message is available that will help a woman make the choice that is in the best interest of both herself and her child. Nor is this approach just a short-term fix that undermines the longer-term solution to our cultural problems: speaking in a compassionate and personal manner will always be at the center of transforming our culture.

To Ralph Gillman: It is fair to say that the ads of the Caring Foundation are more emotive than analytic. At the same time, the goal is to help women reconsider, or "rethink," their position. Those who suggest these ads merely cater to short-term emotions do not appreciate the strategy at work. We do not avoid focusing on the fetus because the fetus is not important or to let the woman "off the hook." Instead we build from the fact that women know, deep down, that abortion kills; we move on to the next step, which is to help women listen to their own voice of conscience. Yes, we should "just get people to think," but to think *for themselves* is the goal if behavioral patterns are to change.

Appetite and Eros

I must thank Gilbert Meilaender ("Gays Marrrying," May) for his generous and thoughtful remarks on my *Love, Covenant & Meaning*. It is deeply gratifying to see the care he took to read and then outline the basic argument. I cannot agree, however, with the theory of "eros" he upholds to maintain that "we should not emphasize [covenant] in a manner that denies the importance of erotic attraction" in marriage. He says he is unsure "what this means for Mills' thesis" [that marriages between women and nonhetero men are very common and have more or less the same capacity for happiness and unhappiness as marriages between women and hetero men]. But my fear is that nonhetero men who are loving and faithful life partners, friends, and soul mates for their wives will hear one more voice of opprobrium in Professor Meilaender's unsubstantiated theory about an "importance" that erotic attraction has in some way or another for the validity of every marriage.

The basic point I wanted to make in my booklet was a pastoral one: in my opinion, most nonhetero men in Western societies override our culture's belief that they ought not to marry the woman they love and raise a family with her. So we should realize that the habit of defining marriage as an "expression of (hetero)sexuality" imposes on nonhetero men who are in every way faithful and loving husbands and fathers an enormous burden of fear that "the" truth about them will be discovered and the relationships most important to them will be dismissed as meaningless and a fraud.

By every research study I'm aware of, heterosexual men are very far from experiencing marriage as the expression of their sexuality. Nevertheless, hetero men rightly promise to "forsake all others" in order to gain the rewards of marriage—love, belonging, and a sense of purpose in life, usually involving the raising of a family. My argument is that those rewards seem (and are) as appealing to nonhetero men as to hetero men; so we should suppose that there are many, many nonhetero men who get married and find more or less the same fulfillment as husbands and fathers as hetero men who marry. And indeed, many nonhetero husbands have written to me, grateful that I've "told their story" and assured them that they are not "living a lie" before God or their fellow human beings. These men feel and believe they belong with their wives—not in lifelong celibacy (a way of life to which only a few men are called), and not in exploring "gay sexuality."

Prof. Meilaender asserts that because I maintain that marriage is not an erotic identity but an identity through a covenant for love and meaning, I therefore imply that "our creation as male and female . . . is unimportant to human identity." But I argue it is precisely from a recognition that "man and woman" expresses who we are as human beings that nonhetero men still marry, though their sexual drives remain mostly or entirely focused on men.

Because I argue there is no reason to think a nonhetero man unfit for marrying the woman he loves simply because of his "orientation," Prof. Meilaender maintains that I suppose marriage is a construct of "rational will" and thus void of all "passion." I emphasize, however, not the will but the heart, and argue that the primary passion-content for any good and basically happy marriage—regardless of the husband's "sexuality"—comes from heartfelt love, faithfulness, friendship, and affection in service of a covenant for meaning and belonging. "Passion" is a very broad category. There's nothing wrong when there's strong "sexual chemistry" between husband and wife, but I argue there's nothing necessarily

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wrong with marriages that, for whatever reasons, have little such passion, which does not in any case provide the basis for marital happiness.

Prof. Meilaender admits that (hetero)sexual desire is too fallen to constitute from itself the primary passion-content of marriage, but he maintains that an "eros" of some sort "personalizes and humanizes" a hetero man's "lusts after all attractive women . . . in such a mysterious way that [he] now desires not just any [attractive] woman but one [his wife]." If there are men who experience a sustained eros of this sort toward their wives, I congratulate them on what I think is rare good luck. Yet what Prof. Meilaender himself goes on to say seems to imply such eros doesn't exist at all: according to him, desire blessed by eros "is not always faithful." "The chaos to which Mills points remains . . . so eros must be made steadfast by covenant." Surely this means eros does not ensure that even a hetero man desires only his wife. Accordingly, is it right to theorize about "eros" in such a way that might seem to call into question the validity of marriages between women and faithful, loving (and therefore passionate) husbands?

Jonathan Mills
Regent College
Vancouver, Canada

Gilbert Meilaender replies:
I do not believe that I anywhere said or implied that the presence or absence of erotic attraction determined the "validity" of a marriage. I only suggested that an approach that does not take eros seriously—as seriously as it has been taken by, say, Plato, Dante, Shakespeare, and the Song of Songs—is going to miss something important in human experience. And what it misses may turn out to be important for our understanding of marriage. "Falling in love" is not the same as lusting after sexual satisfaction. Unless and until Jonathan Mills can grant the truth of this—and our need to reckon with it—his view will be to some degree defective. This, too, is a pastoral point, which it may be perilous to ignore. I agree with Professor Mills that "there's nothing necessarily wrong" with a marriage in which husband and wife experience no strong "sexual chemistry." I never suggested it was wrong. If, however, it is a concern for either spouse, it is a problem for the marriage. That much we ought to recognize.

What I find bracing and good in Prof. Mills' depiction of marriage is his emphasis on the importance of vow, covenant, and will. That is important precisely because eros, in itself, is not always faithful. Prof. Mills seems to think that by granting this I somehow undercut my argument. I can't see why. I allow the importance of appetite, eros, and covenant. He seems to find place for only the first and third of these, and the lacuna is, I suggest, pastorally worrisome. The question is not, as Prof. Mills puts it, whether eros will "ensure that even a hetero man desires only his wife." It will not ensure it, but that is not the point. Such a man might on occasion seek sexual gratification with a prostitute or in a one-night stand. He might also "fall in love" with another woman. The first is appetite; the second eros. Each violates and endangers his marriage, but I incline to think that his wife may more easily forgive the first than the second, and he may more easily repent of the first than the second. In any case, they are different phenomena, raising different problems for faithful marriage. A fully developed view must recognize the difference.

None of this alters my deep respect for the insight and argument of Prof. Mills. We need to take that argument seriously, while continuing to ask for a somewhat richer and fuller account of the place of eros than Prof. Mills has given.

After Emerson

Wilfred M. McClay's fine essay ("Mr. Emerson's Tombstone," May) unwittingly perpetuated a bit of historic revisionism which we can lay at Emerson's feet. The "shot heard 'round the world" that started the first battle of the American Revolution on April 19, 1775 occurred not at the "rude bridge" in Concord as Emerson's "Concord Hymn" poetically states, but rather several hours earlier that day, on the town green in Lexington. It was the sound of gunfire in Lexington, where eight colonial "Minute Men" were killed while British troops were on their way to Concord, that caused Samuel Adams to say to John Hancock, "What a glorious morning for America!", words that have become Lexington's motto. Such literary historic liberties (including Longfellow's famous line that Paul Revere shouted, "The British are coming!"—not likely, as the colonists were British, too; he might have said something akin to,

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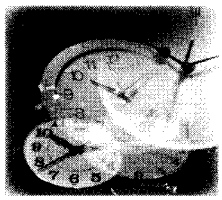

The Signs of the Times: Women and the Future of the Family in a Postmodern World

ELIZABETH FOX-GENOVESE
Scholar and Historian, Emory University

RESPONSES BY:
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"The Regulars are coming")—have become part of our popular culture but do little to serve the truth.

Douglas Yeo
Boston, MA

Wilfred M. McClay, in an otherwise thoughtful and well-written essay, leaves us Christians with a false dilemma. He would have us choose between an "unencumbered self," a self prefigured and represented by Emerson on the one hand, and Protestantism rightly understood on the other. The former, though illusory, Professor McClay still insists we should "never repudiate entirely" because it is part of our collective past, while the latter argues for constraints upon the self by the individual conscience and the Bible.

It is a false dilemma because neither direction is viable. In fact, it can be safely argued that the latter self gave rise to the former self. Prof. McClay intimates as much when he writes that "We now live in an environment in which the Protestant idea has been nearly universalized but at the expense of being truncated and diminished, à la Whitman, into little more than an unrestricted right of individual judgment, unbounded by any limiting principle or any source of authoritative moral rules or prescriptions."

This "limiting principle" cannot simply be one's conscience and/or the Bible. The early (pre-Nicene) Church essentially had no "authoritative text." However, it did have the Holy Spirit as well as its life together as the Church. And within each community of believers, there existed mutual accountability. One was responsible for living a moral life, both to God and the brethren.

Prof. McClay is entirely correct in writing "Protestantism is now paying the price for its textual ways, its low ecclesiology, and its neglect of the communal and countercultural dimension of the Christian life." We must be mindful also that genuine authority is always in Christ and the Church. It is simply not present in either the "impersonal authority of a foundational text" (Scripture) or the individual's own conscience. Thus, if we are to encourage the "noble spark" in humanity, which truly does exist in man, and avoid the "dangerous conflagration of its own excess," we need to cultivate a healthy ecclesiology that underscores our interdependence as the Body of Christ.

Adrian Valentino
Fort Collins, CO

I read with avid interest Wilfred M. McClay's fine article, "Mr. Emerson's Tombstone." However, with all due respect, I think he proved precisely the opposite of what he intended.

Professor McClay's programmatic questions are as follows: "How did the Emersonian ideal of the autonomous self arise, and then become so prevalent in American society? Was it implicit in the nation's very beginnings? Or did it arise out of some detour from those beginnings?" Clearly, Prof. McClay wants the reader to say "no" to the second question, and "yes" to the third, but the facts and patterns he set forth led me to do the reverse.

I have been pondering these questions for ten years, since I was ordained a priest, wondering why ministering in our contemporary American culture seemed such a Sisyphean experience. In prior years, I had followed the on-again, off-again debate between David Schindler of *Communio* and Neuhaus/Novak/Weigel, hoping beyond hope that Schindler was incorrect, that there were not fatal flaws in the American project, rather that it just needed a good tune-up, so that one could resume being heartily *pro Deo et patria.*

By his own words, I think Prof. McClay shows that there is indeed a (more or less) "straight line from the 'shot heard 'round the world' to . . . gangsta rap and NAMBLA." McClay states: "There was a procession [through American cultural intellectual history] from self-control to self-culture to self-worship." I'm afraid that he has chosen a most apt metaphor; a procession implies a slow but steady flow, in a more or less planned direction, from the procession's source of impetus to its natural if not inevitable finish line.

Prof. McClay does a great service in pinpointing Emerson (who was curiously absent from Allen Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind*) as the link between the satisfactory Protestant/Enlightenment founding and the highly unsatisfactory present state of affairs. Please don't get me wrong: I treasure our Protestant brethren/allies, with whom we have infinitely more in common (i.e., Christ) than we do with "Voltaire's bastards." It's just that I think Prof. McClay has unwittingly demonstrated that it is only a quantitative, not a qualitative, leap from private judgment to exposed privates. In this world contaminated with original sin, I think he places too much optimistic stock in "constrained individuality," because the individuality would not be constrained by anything objective, like the Bible, but only one's perhaps fanciful, self-serving, subjective interpretation of the Bible.

Late in his essay, Prof. McClay curiously refers to the post-Emerson "me-first" mentality as a heresy; but who can declare a heresy except some sort of objective, non-Cartesian/subjective source, such as a council, a Pope, a magisterium?

(The Rev.) Joseph M. Hennessey
St. Ann Parish
Dorchester, MA

Wilfred M. McClay replies:
I appreciate Mr. Yeo's kind characterization of my essay, and very much admire his Lexingtonian patriotism. But with all due respect, I think he needs to lighten up. I should have thought it was perfectly logical for me to echo Emerson's figure of speech in an essay built thematically around Emerson and in a sentence alluding to the "Concord Hymn." And is it not a "historic liberty" of the highest order to claim that any of these shots,

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whether fired in Lexington or Concord, was in point of fact "heard 'round the world"?

I believe Adrian Valentino has misunderstood my essay. I am not forcing us to choose between either side of the dilemma he has articulated—precisely because I could not possibly advocate either of the sides of that dilemma as he has expressed them. When I say that we should never repudiate Emerson entirely, I say so in the same sense that we should never repudiate our fathers, unless we have life- or soul-threatening reasons for doing so. Emerson is, after all, dead—which was part of the point of my title. The question is, what are we the living now to do with his memory and legacy? There are ways of moving beyond our parents without repudiating them, indeed without withholding the love and honor and gratitude that are their due—but only if we accept that our past cannot be undone, and that it is the only past we have, and the flawed parents we have are the only real parents on offer.

When I stress the necessity for "the impersonal authority of a foundational text"—a phrase Mr. Valentino has pulled entirely out of its original context, in which I was speaking of the communitarianism of the Massachusetts Bay Colony—I am certainly not speaking of a form of interpretationless and immediate Bibliolatry, of a sort that few intelligent Protestants, even many who might be labeled "fundamentalist," would endorse. Not only is that a straw man, but it ignores the degree to which I am talking in the essay about secular laws and worldly constitutions, and about the evolution of the self, and not only (or even primarily) about theological doctrine.

I couldn't agree more about the mandate to "cultivate a healthy ecclesiology." The formulation of the Nicene Creed, which would certainly qualify as a foundational and authoritative text, was an indispensable part of that very process. But what is (I believe) unique to our present task, a task that First Things has done so much to bring into focus, involves finding common ground and creating a common discussion between and among divergent confessions and traditions whose distinctiveness is historically and existentially rooted, and which are not going to collapse into one another anytime soon. (One reason for that fact being our human inclination, and divine requirement, to honor our fathers and mothers, a commandment that those who move away from their parents' faith are much more likely to neglect.) Indeed, those diversities shouldn't collapse into one another, unless and until the time is right. Given that, and given the fact that (let us say) Southern Baptists are not anytime soon going to accept the authority of a magisterium, or vice versa, I would argue that we need to be asking a different set of questions than the ones raised by Mr. Valentino.

Many of these same considerations apply to Father Hennessey's thoughtful letter. I genuinely don't know whether anything like the "constrained individuality" I praise can be restored as a general feature of American life, and I don't know what form it will take if it is. It is one thing to talk about what needs to be done, and quite another to imagine doing it, particularly in the fragmented culture we now live in. In that latter endeavor, it seems to me that we will have to move in modest steps, with the long haul in mind (though not always in view), never allowing the best to become the enemy of the good. I don't think we have any choice but to work our way through modernity and postmodernity, devising messy and intermediate solutions along the way, walking by faith and not by sight. Which is another way of saying—again—that we have no choice but to revere, and build on, and work past, the only fathers and mothers that we have.

Who Was Dorothy Day?

Many of Geoffrey B. Gneuhs' arguments ("Revolutionary of the Heart," May) against the, as he says, "silly" attempts of secular leftists and liberal Romans to claim Dorothy Day as one of their own are exactly on the mark. He quite rightly remarks her profound orthodoxy, her love of and devotion to the Church, and her prayerful, thoughtful, and faithful Christian rule of life.

At the same time, I believe Mr. Gneuhs' picture of her obscures the quite radical nature of her critique of the socioeconomic order and what she took to be the Church's complicity in it. He is led to some statements that are not congruent with the Dorothy Day that many of us knew.

For example, it was not just "extreme capitalism" but capitalism per se that both she and Peter Maurin criticized. In the late fifties and early sixties, Dorothy and the Catholic Worker movement presented themselves quite forthrightly as anarchists. I had many spirited arguments with her about Catholic anarchism as a practical

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organizing principle of political economy. In August of 1959, Dorothy, I think somewhat exasperated with me after one animated exchange, challenged me to go out into the streets of New York without a penny to live there without recourse to friends or resources. I would there, she hoped, come to understand firsthand what she regarded as the profoundly dehumanizing effects of capitalism upon the poor and upon our society. It was a challenge I accepted and from which I learned much, if not about the intrinsically dehumanizing effect of capitalism, at least about the dehumanizing effect of living in those days penniless on the streets of New York.

Nor is it completely accurate to say, as Mr. Gneuhs does, that she would never "countenance any protest against the Church." Indeed, my first acquaintance with the Catholic Worker movement came from a chance encounter with Catholic Workers from the house on Spring Street who were picketing St. Patrick's Cathedral on a Sunday morning. They carried signs condemning the Church for what Dorothy regarded as the Church's complicity in the military-industrial complex and for the Church's own accumulation of wealth rather than the care of the poor. Afterwards we all went to Spring Street for lunch with her. She not only "countenanced" the action but also commended it.

It was not just a "revolution of the heart" at which she and the *Catholic Worker* aimed, but also a transformation of both society and the Church, a transformation both practical and radical. I write not in any partisan spirit nor from devotion to her political vision—a vision, as I say, about which she and I used to argue in a most animated way. I simply suggest that Dorothy's complex vision of the relationship between God, the Church, and political economy is not entirely consistent with that of either conservatives, liberals, or the left. Perhaps this explains in part why so very many people of good will and of all political persuasions find so much in her thought and her life to honor and inspire.

(The Rev.) Henry Presler
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Monroe, NC

Geoffrey B. Gneuhs replies:
I am not sure what the point of Father Henry Presler's letter is, other than that he was at the *Catholic Worker* in August 1959 and met Dorothy Day. He seems not to have read my article closely. He uses words like "capitalism," "anarchists," "military-industrial complex," and so forth without ever defining these glib expressions; moreover, nowhere does he quote from Dorothy to substantiate anything he says.

In my article, I very clearly state that she and her mentor, Peter Maurin, rejected "Holy Mother the State," whether that be state capitalism or state welfarism. I name the radical thinkers who informed their socioeconomic critique, especially the English Distributists. Doesn't Fr. Presler know the Distributists rejected capitalism? Has he read Gill, Belloc, and Chesterton? Dorothy explained the Catholic Worker position as "our insistence on worker ownership, on the right of private property, on the need to de-proletarize the worker, all points which have been emphasized by the Popes in their social encyclicals."

Moreover, I note that Dorothy's Distributism "was kindred to the manifesto of Allen Tate and the Southern Agrarians." Has Fr. Presler read that manifesto and its critique of modernity, of industrialism, and its call to preserve family farms and communal life? All of this was central to *Catholic Worker* philosophy. Dorothy was a decentralist and sometimes used the word "anarchist," but, as she put it, "not in the popular sense." She quoted Thomas Jefferson: "That government that governs least governs best."

Dorothy's style of criticizing the Church did not, contrary to Fr. Presler's interpretation or wish, involve "condemning." She pointed out frequently that the institutional Church had great wealth and that many bishops and priests lived in great comfort and security. She called for the empty rooms in rectories, seminaries, and monasteries to be filled with the poor; at the least, each parish should have a hospice for the poor.

Too often today the style of criticizing the Church has taken on ways repugnant and abhorrent to Dorothy Day. Last year outside St. Patrick's Cathedral, Catholic school teachers protested so loudly Mass was disturbed; Act-Up in 1989 invaded the cathedral and desecrated the Holy Eucharist; and the Women's Ordination Conference has "alternate liturgies" as well as protests in churches during Mass. Such behavior, as I said in my article, Dorothy would not "countenance." Dorothy did picket, for instance with the Catholic cemetery workers in 1949, quietly, prayerfully, quoting Scripture and papal social teaching—far different from the style of many critics of the Church today.

I would conclude by urging Fr. Presler, if he wants to effect the "socioeconomic" order according to Dorothy Day's vision, to use his position of influence by encouraging his capitalist friends to turn their businesses into worker-owned, employee-owned concerns. The Center for Economic and Social Justice, P.O. Box 40711, Washington, D.C. 20016, promotes that idea as the third way between socialism and capitalism.

Babel Redone?

Is it just my lack of understanding, or a semantic difficulty, or is Dr. Richard J. Mouw's article "Babel Undone" (May) a reflection of the very sort of word and value confusion he is lamenting in American society? Somehow Dr. Mouw's "I care about your psyche" comes across as the theological version of President Bill Clinton's syrupy "I

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feel your pain." Since when is it the purpose of the Christian religion to help heal people's split psyches? I thought the role of religion, and especially the Judeo-Christian religions, was to offer a transcendent worldview and moral system of standards to live by. I can imagine that there are several secular worldviews like egalitarianism, environmentalism, or communism that would serve to integrate one's divided "postmodern consciousness" equally as well, if not better, than Christianity.

Although I agree with much that Dr. Mouw says, is not his article a reflection of the relegation of religion to only the personal, individual, and emotional spheres as has been the historical case in Communist and Socialist societies and under the secular religion of egalitarianism in the United States? How can we get historic transcendent religion back into the public life of a modern society without resorting to a theocracy if religion is something isolated to one's psyche? People's psyches need external or "mediating" institutions—a point made by sociologist Peter L. Berger.

To accomplish this, transcendent religion needs to be reinstituted into public life, which is the purpose of FIRST THINGS and the life work of Father Richard John Neuhaus. An integrated psyche may be a helpful by-product of religious life, but I don't believe it is its raison d'être. Perhaps Dr. Mouw has been hanging out at the Fuller Seminary School of Psychology too much.

Wayne C. Lusvardi
Pasadena, CA

Richard J. Mouw's "Babel Undone" describing "Heather from Glendale," who practices witchcraft but also believes in the resurrection of Christ, effectively illustrates a new challenge facing the missionaries of American suburbia. "I Want to Believe" is the implicit motto of the popular television series *The X-Files* and that attitude permeates our culture, including views toward Christianity. A few decades ago people were skeptical of the Resurrection because it challenged the cohesiveness of the modernist worldview. Today I find that people have no trouble accepting Christianity's historical claims precisely because those claims don't challenge any cohesive worldview; they are just more facts, which need not mean anything. Instead of operating with a few givens in life and interpreting new information according to them, many people now accept all (even contradictory) facts as givens, and have ceased altogether from constructing anything cohesive upon them. Thus, in the eyes of the world the Christian message has graduated from manifest falsehood to meaningless truth.

How should we missionaries engage such a mindset? We must recognize that today's Heather from Glendale actually represents one step forward and two steps back from yesterday's Doubting Thomas. Many are those who have not seen, yet have believed, but few are those who, having believed, proclaim, "My God and my Lord!" We need to help people make that formerly obvious transition. Only then will our historical claims once again translate into moral claims. But we must expect scorn as we help translate, for to draw conclusions is to be as narrow as the Way.

(The Rev.) Peter A. Speckhard
Community of Faith Lutheran Church
Spring Grove, IL

Richard J. Mouw states that "students don't seem to put much stock on coherence and consistency" and describes how some students whom he has observed blend without apparent strain an evangelical Bible study one night with a New Age meditation group on another night, or join a commitment to Christianity with one to Wicca. Mouw is not the only one to have observed such inconsistencies; allow me to tell you my favorite such story.

A few years ago, a bright young woman majoring in Chemical Engineering talked frequently with me about her religious life and her efforts to become a committed Catholic. Sometimes she would join me, along with one or the other student, on one of my brisk early morning walks during which we'd say the rosary and then debate current issues (the rosary lasted fifteen minutes, the walk forty-five).

One of the last conversations I had with her left me concerned. She had discovered Ayn Rand and fallen in love with her philosophy of life. I tried to suggest to her that Rand was not the best guide for the Christian life, that her views practically made community impossible, and that her rationalism excluded any place for God. My warnings didn't seem to dull any of my student's enthusiasm for Rand.

Three years after her graduation, I received a letter from her. She

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wanted me to write a letter of support for her as part of an admissions process to a contemplative order of nuns. I did so, but then included along with the letter of recommendation another letter recalling our conversation about Ayn Rand. I asked her how she made the journey from that way of thinking to the contemplative religious life. She wrote back to me the following letter:

> Thank you for the recommendation. I still agree completely with my understanding of the philosophy of Ayn Rand: every action should be purposeful; each person should be concerned with himself and no one else unless he chooses; non-achievers must take from achievers to survive; achievers make the world operate.
>
> I applied Rand's principles to myself and decided to become a nun. The only purpose in life is to honor God. I need to greatly expand my relationship with God and pray much more often and with more concentration than I do. I am not an achiever in the secular world. I will be an achiever in the cloistered lifestyle because I enjoy silence and need to intensify my relationship with God. By choosing prayer as my vocation, I can help many people forever instead of spending the rest of my life performing tasks that will benefit a few people only during their earthly life.
>
> Thank you again for your letter of recommendation.

I could never have made a transition from Rand to religious life. But I can see how this student made the transition . . . a transition marked by a strange sort of consistency and an almost logical coherence. Perhaps other students will also bring seemingly contradictory views together in ways that we cannot now imagine or even wish to imitate. In any event, I will continue to pray my rosary and write letters of recommendation.

James L. Heft, S.M.
Chancellor
University of Dayton
Dayton, OH

Southern Comfort

Frederica Mathewes-Green ("Go Ahead, Offend Me," May) observes, "The original languages of the Bible . . . use different terms for singular and plural 'you,' yet even the most emphatic proponents of literal translation aren't insisting we go back to 'thee' and 'thou.'" What's wrong with "you" and "you all"? They were alive in 1611, and when I last checked they were still kicking. Perhaps the problem isn't that "archaic, discarded terms can't be resurrected, even if they're more precise," but simply that not enough of the translators are from the South.

J. Budziszewski
Departments of Government and Philosophy
University of Texas at Austin

Religion and the Founding

Christopher Wolfe's review (May) is gracious and helpful but ultimately concedes too much to Michael Zuckert, whose book *The Natural Rights Republic* identifies the source of America's founding neither in classical republican, Christian, Whig historical, or Scottish Enlightenment thought but rather in modern liberal conceptions. For "modern liberal" read secular. Perhaps "concedes" is too strong: rather I should say Wolfe "only murmurs where he should roar," especially should he roar when Zuckert minimizes religion's role in America's founding.

Zuckert should immediately be rapped on the knuckles for three points in particular. First, in dismissing the continuity between America's natural-rights dominated political thought and earlier Puritan thought, Zuckert ignores Professor Quentin Skinner's insight that it was the sixteenth-century Puritans of France, the Huguenots, who first developed our modern rights-based political concepts, concepts that then were taken by Calvinists to the Netherlands and from there to England during the Saints Revolution of the 1640s. Smells of religion to me.

Second, Zuckert understands the Declaration of Independence to be a thoroughly "Lockean" document, thereby inferring it to be secular. Lockean yes, secular no. Locke did carve out a political sphere independent of churchly authority; however, the intellectual underpinnings for this separation of spheres were not secular/skeptical but profoundly theological. As Professor Richard Ashcraft has taught us, Locke with his theologically informed reasoning is a direct descendent of medieval and Reformation political thinkers rather than an agnostic, Enlightenment radical.

Lastly, Zuckert's reliance on the Declaration's citing of "the laws of nature and nature's God" as evidence of the modern liberal God of nature displacing the old-fashioned God of supernature seems misplaced. The concept of laws of nature is as ancient as the Bible. Indeed, the Bible's highlighting of miracles is nonsensical without just such a backdrop of nature; miracles are only "wonders" or "signs" if they break from the normal and natural. If everything is a miracle then nothing is especially miraculous. Later, the medieval theologians' disputations were laced with references to the "laws of nature"; the context of these references—theological disputations—and the identity of the disputants—theologians—suggest that the references were anything but secular. Later still, Locke's own *Second Treatise* made clear that by positing a "state of nature" he did not thereby posit a modern, Hobbesian absence of a law of nature rooted in a transcendental supernature. To the contrary, Locke wrote, "A state of nature is not a state of license but . . . has a law of nature to govern it. . . .

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And reason is that law . . . which [is] the law of God." Lockean yes, secular no.

Paul M. Miller
Bellevue, WA

The Price of Protest

The Public Square ("Remembering the Holocaust," May) properly chastises the *New York Times* for an absurd attempt to blame Pope Pius XII, in effect, for not halting the Holocaust. Just how effective one Catholic protest of Jewish persecution was can be seen in Waltraud Herbstrith's *Edith Stein: A Biography*.

Outraged at Nazi deportations, the bishops of Holland issued a pastoral letter which was read at all Masses on Sunday, July 26, 1942, stating in part: "Let us beseech God . . . to bring about a just peace in the world and to strengthen the people of Israel so sorely tested in these days."

Four days later, Dr. William Harster, Nazi security chief in the Hague, wrote in his journal: "Since the Catholic bishops have interfered in something that does not concern them, deportation of all Catholic Jews will be speeded up and completed within the coming week. No appeals for clemency shall be considered."

On Sunday, August 2, 1942, all Holland's Catholic Jews, including Carmelite nuns Edith Stein and her sister Rosa, were arrested by the Nazis. As can best be determined, the Catholic Jews of Holland and enough other Jews to fill the boxcars of a train were shipped on August 7 to Auschwitz, where on August 9 all were exterminated.

Edith Stein had been approved for transfer to a Carmelite convent in Switzerland, but chose to remain in Holland until her sister could also leave. Whether or not their lives might have been spared without the Dutch bishops' pastoral letter will never be known.

Joseph F. Mattingly
Lexington, KY

Speaking Truth to Power

Regarding "The Case of the Uppity Nun" (Public Square, May): Mother Angelica has no choice but to challenge public statements that diminish the Church's role as the vehicle for the Holy Spirit to bear the Incarnation through time. Politicized clergymen who attempt to build power bases by pandering to fringe groups distort the Christian identity along with the Truth. God has given Mother a razor wit and sharp tongue—she confronts without much diplomacy. I suppose that is why Cardinal Mahoney has adopted an "I'm going to tell my Pope on you" attitude.

In many churches during Holy Week there are reenactments of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples. One would hope that it would remind the powerful in the Church that once in a while they have to get down with the towel. Life is short. Eternity is long. Millstones are heavy.

Nancy E. Hanel
Ijamsville, MD

Father Neuhaus, the Sleuth

Regarding the *New Oxford Review* editorial comment where, as quoted by Father Richard John Neuhaus, we said, "In orthodox Catholic publishing, some of our astute colleagues have apparently decided to take a low profile or in effect sit on the sidelines" in the struggle for orthodoxy in the Church (While We're At It, May): I can't imagine why Fr. Neuhaus might have thought we had Deal Hudson at *Crisis*, Philip Lawler at *Catholic World Report*, or Father Joseph Fessio in mind. Good grief! They're militantly orthodox.

As for Fr. Neuhaus' intriguing detective work on those "powerful people" in a "glitzy corporate boardroom" who are out to "stop" *NOR* lest we "corner the market on Catholic orthodoxy": Is Fr. Neuhaus referring to the fact that our orthodox colleagues at *Our Sunday Visitor* and the *National Catholic Register* have banned *NOR*'s highly effective ads? If so, is he trying to signal that the well-heeled corporations that publish those papers acted in concert to stifle healthy competition? If so, I'm grateful for the tip-off.

Fr. Neuhaus slyly suggests that our move from thirty-two pages per issue to forty pages threatens the corporate types. Well, as of June we have forty-eight pages (again with no increase in price). So it's time for Fr. Neuhaus to do some more boardroom eavesdropping. We eagerly await his next dispatch.

I'm not at all surprised that Fr. Neuhaus has no sympathy for anyone who would try to "stop" *NOR*, for I've always known him to be big-hearted and a good sport, but I am surprised he isn't a big fan of our ads. As he notes, our Reader Survey showed that, among other religious periodicals, First Things is the favorite of our readers. Of the readers whom FT and *NOR* have in common, many came to *NOR*, and now come in increasing numbers, via our ads in FT, and many others have come to FT via the *NOR* mailing list, who came to *NOR* in the first place via our ads in other periodicals. If, as Fr. Neuhaus opines, our ads are "hype," "sensationalist," "silly," and not "sensible," what does that say about a nice slice of Fr. Neuhaus' readers? A word to our esteemed friend: It's not very sensible to question the good sense of one's own readers.

Dale Vree, Editor
New Oxford Review
Berkeley, CA

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THIS TIME

The Lutheran Prospect

James Nuechterlein

When I was a child, Lutherans enthusiastically celebrated October 31 as Reformation Day. Today most of them quietly observe it. That movement from celebration to restrained observation is indicative of the ambiguous situation of contemporary American Lutheranism.

Not that the new attitude is necessarily a bad thing. The Reformation Day services of my childhood were unabashed exercises in Protestant triumphalism. Protestantism in those days still constituted the vital center of American religious culture. Lutherans were located some distance from the center of that center—which was occupied, more or less in order, by Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Congregationalists—but on Reformation Day we could escape our marginal status and enter fully into the grand anti-papist communion. Catholic otherness was so much more Other than our own.

Reformation Day sermons duly praised God for allowing Martin Luther to rediscover the pristine gospel of grace alone through faith alone that Catholic works righteousness had managed to obscure. Just how far back the obscuring went was itself obscure. Whether the gospel had been lost immediately after Paul, after Augustine (the only post-apostolic churchman we ever heard much about), or as late as the Middle Ages was never entirely clear to me. But the important thing was that the gospel had indeed been lost and that Luther had found it again. Only rigorous doctrinal fidelity could prevent it being lost once more.

We took all this with great seriousness. I recall when I was ten or so attending an after-school class at church (taught, as it happened, by my father) that explained the differences between Lutherans and other Christians. It focused, inevitably, on where we differed with Catholics, and those differences—and their consequences—were presented with such stark and troubling force that I was moved to ask my father afterwards, "Are all Catholics going to Hell?" He looked startled by the question and quickly assured me that they were not. The answer consoled me—a number of my friends were Catholic—but also left me confused. If Catholic doctrine had the heart of the gospel wrong, how could its adherents not be damned? The best I could figure out was that only bad Catholics—those who opposed or misunderstood their church's teaching—could be saved.

In retrospect, I suspect that my father's apparent equivocation may have marked the beginning of the end of my childhood Protestant triumphalism. Over time, indeed, I became—along with many other Lutherans—uncomfortable with the Protestant label itself, and came to include myself in the camp of the "evangelical catholics." At the same time, while hoping for ecclesial reconciliation between Catholics and Lutherans, I knew that, if forced to choose, I would retain my membership in the Lutheran communion. My Reformation Day meditations are a good deal more complicated than they used to be, but I can still mark the occasion in good faith.

I do not present my situation as representative of most Lutherans. Indeed, I do not know what a representative American Lutheran would look like today. The fact is that we are of several minds as to the condition of our church and of its proper place in the larger Christian reality.

For some Lutherans, including many in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), rigorous doctrinal particularity remains the hallmark of true Lutheranism. The disputes of the Reformation era still resonate in their theology, and they maintain eternal vigilance against the presumed heresies both of Roman Catholics and of other Protestants. The rigor of their attachment to the sixteenth-century Lutheran Confessions sustains their theological seriousness, but that same rigorism makes them, at best, indifferent to ecumenical involvement with other Christians.

The distinguishing characteristics of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) are mirror images of those of the LCMS. The ELCA is enthusiastic in its ecumenism to the point of promiscuity. It recently entered into full communion with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ, none of which bodies (the UCC in particular) is noted for its doctrinal fastidiousness. (The same 1997 ELCA convention which approved that action narrowly defeated a Concordat of Agreement with the Episcopal Church, a decision likely to be reversed in the reasonably near future.) The ELCA is still officially committed to the Lutheran Confessions, but one wonders, in the wake of the agreement with the reformed churches, what is left of the Augsburg Confession's stipulation that church unity requires agreement in the gospel and the sacraments. Lutherans and Reformed have historically held quite different understandings of, among other things, the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

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Then there are the church-growth Lutherans, present in both the LCMS and ELCA, who are evangelical in style, pietistic in spirit, and focused on conversion of the heart and missionary outreach. They shun Lutheran particularity and are pan-Christian in outlook. They want simply to win souls for Christ.

That leaves, finally, those of us Lutherans who style ourselves as evangelical catholics. (The "evangelical," by the way, does not denote an affinity for evangelical Protestantism.) There are, it should be noted, differences among us. Some, if things come to the crunch, will stay Lutheran no matter what. Others are not at all sure of that. All of us think of Lutheranism as a confessional movement within the one Church of Christ. We are at once ecumenical in spirit—we cannot think of any sane definition of the Christian reality that leaves Catholicism (or Orthodoxy) outside of it—and committed to the distinctive Lutheran construal of the Christian faith.

It appeared recently that Lutheran-Catholic differences had been reduced to the margins by the release of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (JD), a statement negotiated between the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). The Declaration celebrated a new consensus on the issue that had been at the heart of the Reformation, a consensus that would repeal the mutual condemnations of the sixteenth century and, while admitting to lingering differences, would claim they were no longer church-dividing. Then came the Vatican response (see "Setback in Rome," Public Square).

Diplomatic niceties aside—negotiators from both the LWF and the Vatican office involved in JD's drafting were left scraping great quantities of egg off their faces—the response indicates that the doctrinal convergence between Catholics and Lutherans may not be so great as some evangelical catholics have supposed. While affirming that "a high degree of agreement has been reached," the response lists eight points, in order of importance, "that constitute still an obstacle to agreement between the Catholic Church and the [LWF] on all the fundamental truths concerning justification."

Point number one states that, for Catholics, "the [Lutheran] formula '*at the same time righteous and sinner*,' as it is explained [in JD] ('*Believers are totally righteous, in that God forgives their sins through Word and Sacrament. . . . Looking at themselves, however, they recognize that they remain also totally sinners. Sin still lives in them. . . .*'), is not acceptable." Indeed, the response concludes (in the tortuous language of ecclesial diplomacy) that "it remains difficult to see how, in the current state of the presentation given in the Joint Declaration, we can say that this doctrine on '*simul iustus et peccator*' is not touched by the anathemas" of the Council of Trent.

This is not the occasion for an elaboration or defense of the place of *simul iustus et peccator* in Lutheran theology. Suffice it to say it is at the very heart of the Lutheran understanding of the believer's condition. Take *simul* and its ramifications away and you have taken away the dialectical theological framework that makes Lutheran theology Lutheran. And now the Vatican officially suggests that the doctrine is still anathema.

This leaves Lutheran evangelical catholics in an awkward position. The Vatican response urges further conversation on the issue, and it may be that the flat rejection of *simul* is not the Catholic Church's last word on the subject. Maybe. The more likely prospect, I expect, is that the condemnation will stand, which suggests, for this and for other reasons, that the notion of full reconciliation between Catholics and Lutherans is an eschatological concept. The dialogue will continue, and we can hope and pray that even if full agreement on justification and other questions is not reached, they may nonetheless no longer be seen as church-dividing.

That is a process for the long haul. Perhaps the very long haul. In the meantime, Lutherans can continue in good conscience to observe—and even celebrate—Reformation Day. Not, to be sure, in a spirit of triumphalism, but not burdened with apologies, either. FT

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Opinion

Subversive Virginity

Sarah E. Hinlicky

Okay, I'll admit it: I am twenty-two years old and still a virgin. Not for lack of opportunity, my vanity hastens to add. Had I ever felt unduly burdened by my unfashionable innocence, I could have found someone to attend to the problem. But I never did. Our mainstream culture tells me that some oppressive force must be the cause of my late-in-life virginity, maybe an inordinate fear of men or God or getting caught. Perhaps it's right, since I can pinpoint a number of influences that have persuaded me to remain a virgin. My mother taught me that self-respect requires self-control, and my father taught me to demand the same from men. I'm enough of a country bumpkin to suspect that contraceptives might not be enough to prevent an unwanted pregnancy or disease, and I think that abortion is killing a baby. I buy into all that Christian doctrine of law and promise, which means that the stuffy old commandments are still binding on my conscience. And I'm even naive enough to believe in permanent, exclusive, divinely ordained love between a man and a woman, a love so valuable that it motivates me to keep my legs tightly crossed in the most tempting of situations.

In spite of all this, I still think of myself as something of a feminist, since virginity has the result of creating respect for and upholding the value of the woman so inclined. But I have discovered that the reigning feminism of today has little use for it. There was a time when I was foolish enough to look for literature among women's publications that might offer support in my very personal decision. (It's all about choice, after all, isn't it?) The dearth of information on virginity might lead one to believe that it's a taboo subject. However, I was fortunate enough to discover a short article on it in that revered tome of feminism, *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. The most recent edition of the book has a more positive attitude than the edition before it, in that it acknowledges virginity as a legitimate choice and not just a by-product of patriarchy. Still, in less than a page, it presumes to cover the whole range of emotion and experience involved in virginity, which, it seems, consists simply in the notion that a woman should wait until she's really ready to express her sexuality. That's all there is to say about it. Apparently, sexual expression takes place only in and after the act of genital intercourse. Anything subtler—like a feminine love of cooking or tendency to cry at the movies or unsuppressable maternal instinct or cultivation of a wardrobe that will turn heads or even a passionate good-night kiss—is deemed an inadequate demonstration of sexual identity. The unspoken message of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* is clear enough: as long as a woman is a virgin, she remains completely asexual.

Surprisingly, this attitude has infiltrated the thinking of many women my age, who should still be new enough in the web of lies called adulthood to know better. One of my most vivid college memories is of a conversation with a good friend about my (to her) bizarre aberration of virginity. She and another pal had been delving into the gruesome specifics of their past sexual encounters. Finally, after some time, my friend suddenly exclaimed to me, "How do you do it?"

A little taken aback, I said, "Do what?"

"You know," she answered, a little reluctant, perhaps, to use the big bad V-word. "You still haven't . . . slept with anybody. How do you do it? Don't you *want* to?"

The question intrigued me, because it was so utterly beside the point. Of course I want to—what a strange question!—but mere wanting is hardly a proper guide for moral conduct. I assured my concerned friend that my libido was still in proper working order, but then I had to come up with a good reason why I had been paying attention to my inhibitions for all these years. I offered the usual reasons—emotional and physical health, religious convictions, "saving myself" till marriage—but nothing convinced her until I said, "I guess I don't know what I'm missing." She was satisfied with that and ended the conversation.

In one sense, sure, I don't know what I'm missing. And it is common enough among those who *do* know what they're missing to go to great lengths to insure that they don't miss it for very long. In another sense, though, I could list a lot of things that I do know I'm missing: hurt, betrayal, anxiety, self-deception, fear, suspicion, anger, confusion, and the horror of having been used. And those are only emotional aspects; there is also disease, unwanted pregnancy, and abortion. As if to prove my case from the other side, my friend suffered a traumatic betrayal within a month or two of our conversation. It turned out that the man involved would gladly sleep with her, but refused to have a "real relationship"—a sad reality she discovered only after the fact.

According to received feminist wisdom, sexuality is to be understood through the twin concepts of power and choice. It's not a matter of anything so ba-

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nally biological as producing children, or even the more elevated notion of creating intimacy and trust. Sometimes it seems like sex isn't even supposed to be fun. The purpose of female sexuality is to assert power over hapless men, for control, revenge, self-centered pleasure, or forcing a commitment. A woman who declines to express herself in sexual activity, then, has fallen prey to a male-dominated society that wishes to prevent women from becoming powerful. By contrast, it is said, a woman who does become sexually active discovers her power over men and exercises it, supposedly to her personal enhancement.

This is an absurd lie. That kind of gender-war sexuality results only in pyrrhic victories. It's a set-up for disaster, especially for women. Men aren't the ones who get pregnant. And who ever heard of a man purchasing a glossy magazine to learn the secret of snagging a wife? Sacrifice and the relinquishing of power are natural to women—ask any mom—and they are also the secret of feminine appeal. The pretense that aggression and power-mongering are the only options for female sexual success has opened the door to predatory men. The imbalance of power becomes greater than ever in a culture of easy access.

Against this system of mutual exploitation stands the more compelling alternative of virginity. It escapes the ruthless cycle of winning and losing because it refuses to play the game. The promiscuous of both sexes will take their cheap shots at one another, disguising infidelity and selfishness as freedom and independence, and blaming the aftermath on one another. But no one can claim control over a virgin. Virginity is not a matter of asserting power in order to manipulate. It is a refusal to exploit or be exploited. That is real, and responsible, power.

But there is more to it than mere escape. There is an undeniable appeal in virginity, something that eludes the resentful feminist's contemptuous label of "prude." A virgin woman is an unattainable object of desire, and it is precisely her unattainability that increases her desirability. Feminism has told a lie in defense of its own promiscuity, namely, that there is no sexual power to be found in virginity. On the contrary, virgin sexuality has extraordinary and unusual power. There's no second-guessing a virgin's motives: her strength comes from a source beyond her transitory whims. It is sexuality dedicated to hope, to the future, to marital love, to children, and to God. Her virginity is, at the same time, a statement of her mature independence from men. It allows a woman to become a whole person in her own right, without needing a man either to revolt against or to complete what she lacks. It is very simple, really: no matter how wonderful, charming, handsome, intelligent, thoughtful, rich, or persuasive he is, he simply cannot have her. A virgin is perfectly unpossessable. Of course, there have been some women who have attempted to claim this independence from men by turning in on themselves and opting for lesbian sexuality instead. But this is just another, perhaps deeper, rejection of their femaleness. The sexes rightly define themselves in their otherness. Lesbianism squelches the design of otherness by drowning womanhood in a sea of sameness, and in the process loses any concept of what makes the female feminine. Virginity upholds simply and honestly that which is valuable in and unique to women.

The corollary of power is choice. Again, the feminist assumes that sexually powerful women will be able to choose their own fates. And again, it is a lie. No one can engage in extramarital sex and then control it. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the moral nightmare of our society's breakdown since the sexual revolution. Some time ago I saw on TV the introduction of the groundbreaking new "female condom." A spokeswoman at a press conference celebrating its grand opening declared joyously the new freedom that it gave to women. "Now women have more bargaining power," she said. "If a man says that he refuses to wear a condom, the woman can counter, fine, I will!" I was dumbstruck by her enthusiasm for the dynamics of the new situation. Why on earth would two people harboring so much animosity towards each other contemplate a sexual encounter? What an appealing choice they have been given the freedom to make!

The dark reality, of course, is that it is not free choice at all when women must convince men to love them and must convince themselves that they are more than just "used goods." There are so many young women I have known for whom freely chosen sexual activity means a brief moment of pleasure—if that—followed by the unchosen side effects of paralyzing uncertainty, anger at the man involved, and finally a deep self-hatred that is impenetrable by feminist analysis. So-called sexual freedom is really just proclaiming oneself to be available for free, and therefore without value. To "choose" such freedom is tantamount to saying that one is worth nothing.

Admittedly, there are some who say that sex isn't anything nearly so serious or important, but just another recreational activity not substantially different from ping-pong. I don't believe it for a second. I learned most meaningfully from another woman the destructive force of sexuality out of control when I myself was under considerable pressure to cave in to a man's sexual demands. I discussed the prospect with this friend, and after some time she finally said to me, "Don't do it. So far in life you've made all the right choices and I've made all the wrong ones. I care enough about you that I don't want to see you end up like me." Naturally, that made up my mind. Sex does matter; it matters a lot; and I can only hope that those who deny it will wake up to their error before they damage themselves even more.

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It is appalling that feminism has propagated lies so destructive to women. It has created the illusion that there is no room for self-discovery outside of sexual behavior. Not only is this a grotesque lie, but it is also an utterly *boring* one. Aside from its implied dismissal of all the world's many riches outside the sexual domain, this false concept has placed stultifying limitations on the range of human relationships. We're told that friendships between men and women are just a cover until they leap into the sack together. While romance is a natural and commendable expression of love between women and men, it is simply not the only option. And in our sexually competitive climate, even romantic love barely deserves the title. Virginity among those seeking marital love would go far to improve the latter's solidity and permanence, creating an atmosphere of honesty and discovery *before* the equally necessary and longed-for consummation. Where feminism sees freedom from men by placing body parts at their disposal in a bizarre game of self-deception, virginity recognizes the equally vulnerable though often overlooked state of men's own hearts and seeks a way to love them for real.

It is puzzling and disturbing to me that regnant feminism has never acknowledged the empowering value of virginity. I tend to think that much of the feminist agenda is more invested in the culture of groundless autonomy and sexual Darwinism than it is in genuinely uplifting women. Of course, virginity is a battle against sexual temptation, and popular culture always opts for the easy way out instead of the character-building struggle. The result is superficial women formed by meaningless choices, worthy of stereotype, rather than laudable women of character, worthy of respect.

Perhaps virginity seems a bit cold, even haughty and heartless. But virginity hardly has exclusive claim on those defects, if it has any claim at all. Promiscuity offers a significantly worse fate. I have a very dear friend who, sadly, is more worldly-wise than I am. By libertine feminist standards she ought to be proud of her conquests and ready for more, but frequently she isn't. The most telling insight about the shambles of her heart came to me once in a phone conversation when we were speculating about our futures. Generally they are filled with exotic travel and adventure and PhDs. This time, however, they were not. She admitted to me that what she really wanted was to be living on a farm in rural Connecticut, raising a horde of children and embroidering tea towels. It is a lovely dream, defiantly unambitious and domestic. But her short, failed sexual relationships haven't taken her any closer to her dream and have left her little hope that she'll ever attain it. I must be honest here: virginity hasn't landed me on a farm in rural Connecticut, either. Sexual innocence is not a guarantee against heartbreak. But there is a crucial difference: I haven't lost a part of myself to someone who has subsequently spurned it, rejected it, and perhaps never cared for it at all.

I sincerely hope that virginity will not be a lifetime project for me. Quite the contrary, my subversive commitment to virginity serves as preparation for another commitment, for loving one man completely and exclusively. Admittedly, there is a minor frustration in my love: I haven't met the man yet (at least, not to my knowledge). But hope, which does not disappoint, sustains me.

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C. S. Lewis on Mere Science

M. D. Aeschliman

In *The Abolition of Man* C. S. Lewis noted that nothing he could say would keep some people from saying that he was anti-science, a charge he was nevertheless eager to refute. In fact he had received the kind of philosophical education at Oxford that enabled him, like John Henry Newman before him, to resist the two opposed temptations that the historian of science Richard Olson has labeled "science deified" and "science defied." On this centenary of Lewis' birth, we might describe his attitude as an appreciation of "mere science."

"Science deified" is scientism, radical empiricism, materialism, or naturalism, an implicit or explicit rejection of all nonquantifiable realities or truths, including the truths of reason. Its logical terminus is determinism or "epiphenomenalism," Huxley's notion that the brain and mind are fully determined by-products of irrational physical processes. As the German materialist Bernhard Vogt put it, "Thoughts come out of the brain as gall from the liver, or urine from the kidneys," implying that thoughts are just as irrational and beyond our control. Vogt and the other materialists contradict themselves, though, because—as Lewis often noted—they claim that their own scientific thoughts are true.

The deification of science first became explicit in the writings of the atheistic French philosophes La Mettrie, D'Holbach, and Diderot. Thoughtful twentieth-century commentators such as Lester G. Crocker and Aldous Huxley have seen its reductionism leading straight to the moral nihilism of the Marquis de Sade, and later to Social Darwinism and the Nietzschean transvaluation of values in the interest of amoral strength and force. Lewis' *Abolition of Man* is, inter alia, an extended treatise against the deifica-

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tion of science.

Yet there is an opposite temptation that Lewis also criticized—the temptation to *defy* science, from the standpoint of either romantic/pantheistic gnosticism or theological fideism. The first was familiar to him from the theosophy of his close friends Owen Barfield and A. C. Harwood and from the whole history of Romanticism, culminating in the work and world of W. B. Yeats. (Yeats was probably the model for the magician in Lewis' *Dymer* and for Merlin in *That Hideous Strength.*) The appeal of pantheistic gnosticism was something that Lewis understood and withstood; it lies at the heart of occult "New Age" spirituality, "Deep Ecology," and a good deal of "Eco-feminism" today.

Romantic self-absorption and pantheistic gnosticism are targets of Lewis' satire in *The Pilgrim's Regress.* Much as he criticized radical empiricism and its sterile, truncated rationalism, he was himself too much of a rationalist in the classic, Aristotelian sense to countenance esoteric or occult mysticism and the depreciation of reason. He would not defy science on romantic or gnostic grounds.

Lewis knew that science was one of the great products of the human mind, but he insisted that it was a subset of reason and not simply equivalent to it. Scientific reason, if accurate, was valid, but it was not the only valid kind of reasoning: noncontradiction, validity, truth, value, meaning, purpose, and obligation were necessary presuppositions of the scientific method but not themselves scientific phenomena. Lewis thought that, in Alfred North Whitehead's words, scientists who were "animated by the purpose of proving that they are purposeless constitute an interesting subject for study." He satirically depicted such scientists in *That Hideous Strength,* especially in the figure of Frost. Of all radical empiricists, from La Mettrie and Hume to A. J. Ayer, who would undermine the authority of reason and its procedures, Lewis tirelessly pointed out this contradiction. He believed in the old adage that "the only way to avoid metaphysics is to say nothing," because in some important sense language and thought themselves are non-natural, supernatural, transcendent, and metaphysical. "In order to think," he wrote in 1942, "we must claim for our reasoning a validity which is not credible if our own thought is merely a function of our brain, and our brains a by-product of irrational physical processes."

Lewis' love of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance was due largely to his loyalty to an epistemology that he thought had been caricatured and misunderstood by Bacon, Descartes, and the French Encyclopedists of the eighteenth century. As a careful student of the history of philosophy and ideas, he knew that the great flowering of scientific thought in the seventeenth century had not only Greek roots, but medieval ones. Whitehead pointed out long ago, in *Science and the Modern World,* that the habits of medieval rationalism prepared the way for the scientific discoveries of the seventeenth century, an insight given far more documentation, depth, and scope in the writings of the historian and philosopher of science Stanley L. Jaki in our time. Long before Bacon, Jaki has written, Christian philosophy had steadily inculcated "the conviction . . . that since the world was rational it could be comprehended by the human mind, but as the product of the Creator it could not be derived from the mind of man, a creature." The "metaphysical realism" of St. Thomas Aquinas (and of Richard Hooker in England) avoided the extremes of empiricism and idealism and thus paved the way for Newton.

Jaki's work has confirmed some of Lewis' insights about the origin and development of Western science, and particularly its indebtedness to the doctrine of creation ex nihilo to escape from mistaken Aristotelian ideas about time and matter. The importance of the medieval thinkers Buridan and Oresme for science had been rediscovered by the great twentieth-century French physicist Pierre Duhem, whose own work Jaki has done so much to restore to the prominence it deserves. The active intellectual discrimination against Duhem, and subsequently against Jaki—despite their enormous erudition and unquestionable distinction—would not have surprised the man who wrote "The Inner Ring," "Bulverism," *The Abolition of Man,* and *That Hideous Strength.*

For among historians of science it is most prominently Duhem and Jaki who have provided the documentation of the importance of theism and "metaphysical realism" not only for the origin and development of modern science, but also for the possibility of its coherent continuation and moral direction. Duhem and Jaki have provided security for Lewis' claim that "Men became scientific because they expected Law in Nature, and they expected Law in Nature because they believed in a Legislator. In most modern scientists this belief has died: it will be interesting to see how long their confidence in uniformity survives it. Two significant developments have already appeared—the hypothesis of a lawless sub-nature, and the surrender of the claim that science is true. We may be living nearer than we suppose to the end of the Scientific Age."

And as a believer in the essential sanity and continuity of Western Civilization, Lewis would surely have concurred with Jaki's characterization of the Middle Ages: "In Western philosophy that was the first and thus far the last major epoch in which broadly shared respect was paid to the fundamental difference between ends and means. . . . If we do not wish to help turn this most scientific age of ours into the most barbaric of all ages, we had better stop using

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the term 'medieval' as synonymous with obscurantist. In doing so, we may make our mental eyes more sensitive to that light which comes from the Middle Ages."

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Neocons vs. Theocons, Again

Robert Lowry Clinton

In November 1996, a FIRST THINGS symposium on American democracy and the courts raised a furor among two groups of conservatives that later came to be known as "theocons" and "neocons." The controversy was sparked by Father Richard John Neuhaus' purported suggestion—backed up more or less strongly by several of the symposium's other contributors—that reasonable people might plausibly view the current American regime, at least in some of its judicially driven aspects, as "illegitimate."

It is easy to understand why conservatives would be uncomfortable with such a suggestion. After all, most Americans were reared on a particular variant of the Lockean contract theory of government that ultimately found its way into the Declaration of Independence. According to this theory, a determination of governmental illegitimacy justifies armed rebellion. Yet conservatives have also been reared on Edmund Burke's idea that revolutions are almost never justified—even when official behavior seems intolerable.

Now that the furor has subsided, I would like to offer some thoughts about the idea of "legitimacy" and its relation to the judicial usurpation that both conservative camps seem to have agreed upon. I shall begin by offering the suggestion that "legitimacy" is, strictly speaking, a term that both derives from, and modifies, "law." It has, in modern times, been applied to government as a whole, but as the etymology suggests, this application is problematic.

In classical legal thought, before the rise of the modern notion of sovereignty and of the nation-state, legitimacy attached to the *acts* of government but not to its very *existence*. That is why a regime whose acts and laws were unjust could be thought without contradiction to deserve obedience. As St. Augustine put it: all human governments are fatally defective and thus *merit* no allegiance; yet the *peregrini*, the children of God whose real citizenship is in the City of God, nonetheless have a near-absolute obligation to submit to these unjust regimes during their brief stay on earth, because the alternative (revolution) is complete disorder.

Thomas Aquinas did not put the matter quite so starkly, but the gist of his remarks is the same. For St. Thomas, the entire universe is governed by laws, and human or positive laws are only a small subset of this larger body of law. Moreover, since the positive laws that govern human society are merely attempts to represent the human law that is derivative from *lex natura*—engrafted upon human nature—and in conformity with the *lex aeterna*, their "legitimacy" is entirely a question of the extent to which they capture the existing reality that they are designed to represent. Since the attempt to capture and represent this reality is concrete and particular, it is manifest only in particular acts and laws—not in the regime as a whole.

Thus Socrates sums up the whole of classical legal thought in *Minos* when he answers the question "What is law, for us?" with the statement "Law is the discovery of what is." And the process of discovery proceeds, as it were, "case-by-case." In the *Summa Theologica*, St. Thomas can assert simultaneously and confidently *both* of the following points: (1) the acts of a human legal authority that are not in conformity with the *lex aeterna* are not really laws at all—except in a "perverse" or unjust sense; and (2) there is a general duty of obedience that attaches even to unjust "laws" (non-laws) for the sake of earthly peace, which—along with the inculcation of virtue—is one of the two main purposes of human law.

The reason that these two propositions seem paradoxical—or even contradictory—to modern observers is that the dominant jurisprudence of the day is a variant of legal positivism, which holds forth a "command" theory of law, insisting that all law is the result of human artifice. Legal positivism demands an all-or-nothing answer to any question about a regime's legitimacy because positivism itself provides no ground for law and legitimacy save that of raw power. But there can be no such answer. Classical legal naturalism, in its explicit avowal of a "higher" standard to which all laws and other acts of government must conform to be recognized as fully "legitimate," makes it possible to critique the law without calling into question the authority of the lawgiver every time such a critique is offered. The reaction of secular conservatives to Neuhaus' suggestion thus demonstrates the hold that positivism has even on thoughtful conservatives in our time.

The extent to which the regime as a whole represents or approximates adequately the higher or

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more fundamental law that imparts its legitimacy is a question of degree that can be answered only by a practical judgment grounded on familiarity with a large number of the relevant details. The mere fact of a regime's existence being preferable to any currently feasible alternative does not prevent our raising questions regarding the extent to which its institutions, acts, and laws rest upon a solid foundation of constitutionally legitimate authority. Despite the objections of the neocons, such questions should be regarded as always open. Indeed, if they were not, there would probably be no American Republic at all to claim the loyalty of the neocons and others; for it strains credulity to think that the revolt of the colonies against king and parliament was a revolt against a regime so monstrous as to exempt the colonists from the normal, conservative duty of obedience even to unjust regimes.

The word "legitimate" derives from the Roman *lex* (law), which in turn derives from the verb *ligare* (to bind). Legitimacy is a measure of the justice of the laws that bind individuals to the polity, of the extent to which we are truly governed by laws and not by men. The Antifederalist Brutus predicted long ago that the federal constitution would, in time, turn into a judicial oligarchy. But it was upon the *rejection* of that prediction that the American Constitution was found acceptable by the people of the United States. This means that if American constitutionalism presently amounts to government by judges and not by laws, the Founders' Constitution, at least in one important sense, no longer exists.

Yet most people do think that the Founders' Constitution still exists; and I think that is why most people still regard the American regime as "legitimate." They do not regard it as legitimate merely *because* it exists, or because—though no longer properly grounded in the Founders' Constitution—no alternatives are conceivable. In my view, this is why Father Neuhaus' remarks must be taken seriously. He has merely seen before what everyone else will see later if his remarks are not taken seriously. If Neuhaus is right, no effort by neoconservative intellectuals to suppress the thoughts that led to his remarks will be successful; and if he is wrong, then it hardly seems likely that a revolution will ensue as their result.

If conservatives are generally correct in their judgment that the courts have usurped many of the primary functions of the legislative and executive branches—and, again, theocons and neocons alike seem to agree on this point—then precisely to the extent of that usurpation their acts (though not necessarily the regime as a whole) are illegitimate *by definition.* Ours is a government of assigned powers, and the question of legitimacy is thus about the extent to which our delegated organs of government are staying within the limits of those assigned powers. Mary Ellen Bork, in the remark reported by her husband in his symposium article, has gotten it exactly right: if the courts are making decisions that they do not have the constitutional authority to make, they are behaving like "a bunch of outlaws." It doesn't matter that the judges don't know they are behaving like outlaws, for they themselves impose the time-honored maxim of law holding that "ignorance of the law is no excuse for its violation."

Does this mean that conservatives should take up arms and try to overthrow the government? Of course not. But it does mean that we should recognize the extent to which our government—especially its judicial branch—has been courting illegitimacy in recent years; and we should acknowledge the fact that constitutional legitimacy is a practical status that the government must *earn* by refusing to overreach its constitutional authority. The pressing problem for conservatives is how to awaken the American democracy to the necessity of policing the legal establishment and the courts, before its long-run interests are irredeemably compromised.

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The Fall

I. September

New England comes to flower dying.
Leaves like new-blown blossoms trail
in fluttered rage from tainted trees.
The year grows willful. Stagnant ponds
strain to clamber quarry walls.
Time slips indenture, backing age
on fuddled age, confusing fall
with summer—snow with hawthorn flurries,
apple flakes along black boughs.
North of Boston, fire falls
from tree to tree, and leaf by leaf
perverse New England springs to bloom.
The world is kindling for the Lord.
Sour births and welcome slaughters,
gravid fathers getting sons,
eastern sunsets, maddened mothers,
brazen midnights, talking dogs
expounding blood and mongerings of war:
I woke to see New England burning,
woke to see September's flames
streaming like the blood of martyrs
guttered in the towns of Maine.
I watched the woods of Concord catch,
the flash of Canaan, Bethel, Keene,
the raging hills of Holyoke.
The forests of Vermont have gained
for Boston not a single day
and all the trees of Plymouth rise
like smoke of children passed through fire—
for every falling leaf's a spit
of flame that wants New England's death
and every leaf's a burning tongue
that cries for vengeance from our wrongs.

II. October

The twisted roots begin to stir.
Now mulched with new-born children's soft
unsuckled greenstick bones, they pry
among the topsoiled Irish graves.
The daughters of dead chambermaids
skip Mass to flirt on Salem's greens.
New England's gravemuck clogs their feet.
Down, down, the fat roots reach
for bankers' nieces, shy white-bodied
girls who giggled once out loud
and blushed and fled the bright cotillion;
for Amherst boys, their new mustaches
wet with ice, who laughed and steamed
and tugged off mittens with their teeth.
Rolled on surging roots, the dead
Atlantic sailors rise and fall,
the Gloucestermen come safe to shore.
A button on a bright gray shroud,
a patch of blue, love clasped with grief—
there was a time such things survived
but now all death is drained of life.
The cold divines who preached from Kings,
the stone-fence farmers, Mohawk hunters,
pewtersmiths, Green Mountain boys,
harpooners, poets, pinned-sleeve bluecoats:
Netted roots have wrapped them round,
sapped them, and plunged deeper down
toward ancient gulfs where first blood flowed.
At the world's core lies a lake
where slaughters stream and pale roots drink.
The thick remains of sin are coursing
through October trees to splatter
red New England's sky with leaves.

III. November

Off Winter Harbor, Christmas Cove,
Fairhaven, Wellfleet—now the cold
gray sea turns back against the shore.
Hard combers rake between the rocks
for bottles, paper, bits of glass.
Angry whitecaps scour the beach
and foam among the driftwood dams.
The signs were there but who believed?
The long cold grass along the hill
stiff with scripts of morning frost,
the ragged geese-Vs pointing south,
the rains that splayed the yellow leaves
like opened wounds along the path:
Still the forecast winter stalled
and we forgot what follows fall.
New England's cold November sets
bare ruined oaks against gray skies.
A thousand leafless crosses weave
among the trees. No hue remains.
This is the killing time between
the crime and judgment, act and pain,
the pregnant days when we pretend
that consequences will miscarry—
witness perjured, time suborned—
until at last the winter breaks,
sweeping down the western hills
across Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine
to fill the valleys, close the woods,
entomb the cities, still the seas.
Deep in snow New England holds
lovely, silent, finished, clean.
What mercy after such forgiveness?
What resurrection waits on spring?

J. Bottum

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Science and Design

William A. Dembski

When the physics of Galileo and Newton displaced the physics of Aristotle, scientists tried to explain the world by discovering its deterministic natural laws. When the quantum physics of Bohr and Heisenberg in turn displaced the physics of Galileo and Newton, scientists realized they needed to supplement their deterministic natural laws by taking into account chance processes in their explanations of our universe. Chance and necessity, to use a phrase made famous by Jacques Monod, thus set the boundaries of scientific explanation.

Today, however, chance and necessity have proven insufficient to account for all scientific phenomena. Without invoking the rightly discarded teleologies, entelechies, and vitalisms of the past, one can still see that a third mode of explanation is required, namely, intelligent design. Chance, necessity, and design—these three modes of explanation—are needed to explain the full range of scientific phenomena.

Not all scientists see that excluding intelligent design artificially restricts science, however. Richard Dawkins, an arch-Darwinist, begins his book *The Blind Watchmaker* by stating, "Biology is the study of complicated things that give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose." Statements like this echo throughout the biological literature. In *What Mad Pursuit*, Francis Crick, Nobel laureate and codiscoverer of the structure of DNA, writes, "Biologists must constantly keep in mind that what they see was not designed, but rather evolved."

The biological community thinks it has accounted for the apparent design in nature through the Darwinian mechanism of random mutation and natural selection. The point to appreciate, however, is that in accounting for the apparent design in nature, biologists regard themselves as having made a successful *scientific* argument against actual design. This is important, because for a claim to be scientifically falsifiable, it must have the possibility of being true. Scientific refutation is a double-edged sword. Claims that are refuted scientifically may be wrong, but they are not *necessarily* wrong—they cannot simply be dismissed out of hand.

To see this, consider what would happen if microscopic examination revealed that every cell was inscribed with the phrase "Made by Yahweh." Of course cells don't have "Made by Yahweh" inscribed on them, but that's not the point. The point is that we wouldn't know this unless we actually looked at cells under the microscope. And if they were so inscribed, one would have to entertain the thought, as a scientist, that they actually were made by Yaweh. So even those who do not believe in it tacitly admit that design always remains a live option in biology. A priori prohibitions against design are philosophically unsophisticated and easily countered. Nonetheless, once we admit that design cannot be excluded from science without argument, a weightier question remains: Why should we want to admit design into science?

To answer this question, let us turn it around and ask instead, Why shouldn't we want to admit design into science? What's wrong with explaining something as designed by an intelligent agent? Certainly there are many everyday occurrences that we explain by appealing to design. Moreover, in our workaday lives it is absolutely crucial to distinguish accident from design. We demand answers to such questions as, Did she fall or was she pushed? Did someone die accidentally or commit suicide? Was this song conceived independently or was it plagiarized? Did someone just get lucky on the stock market or was there insider trading?

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Not only do we demand answers to such questions, but entire industries are devoted to drawing the distinction between accident and design. Here we can include forensic science, intellectual property law, insurance claims investigation, cryptography, and random number generation—to name but a few. Science itself needs to draw this distinction to keep itself honest. Just last January there was a report in *Science* that a Medline websearch uncovered a "paper published in *Zentralblatt für Gynäkologie* in 1991 [containing] text that is almost identical to text from a paper published in 1979 in the *Journal of Maxillofacial Surgery*." Plagiarism and data falsification are far more common in science than we would like to admit. What keeps these abuses in check is our ability to detect them.

If design is so readily detectable outside science, and if its detectability is one of the key factors keeping scientists honest, why should design be barred from the content of science? Why do Dawkins and Crick feel compelled to constantly remind us that biology studies things that only appear to be designed, but that in fact are not designed? Why couldn't biology study things that are designed?

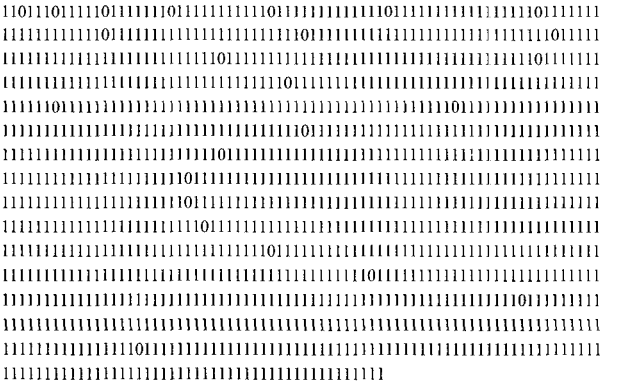
The biological community's response to these questions has been to resist design absolutely. The worry is that for natural objects (unlike human artifacts) the distinction between design and non-design cannot be reliably drawn. Consider, for instance, the following remark by Darwin in the concluding chapter of his *Origin of Species*: "Several eminent naturalists have of late published their belief that a multitude of reputed species in each genus are not real species; but that other species are real, that is, have been independently created. . . . Nevertheless they do not pretend that they can define, or even conjecture, which are the created forms of life, and which are those produced by secondary laws. They admit variation as a *vera causa* in one case, they arbitrarily reject it in another, without assigning any distinction in the two cases." Biologists worry about attributing something to design (here identified with creation) only to have it overturned later; this widespread and legitimate concern has prevented them from using intelligent design as a valid scientific explanation.

Though perhaps justified in the past, this worry is no longer tenable. There now exists a rigorous criterion—complexity-specification—for distinguishing intelligently caused objects from unintelligently caused ones. Many special sciences already use this criterion, though in a pre-theoretic form (e.g., forensic science, artificial intelligence, cryptography, archeology, and the Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence). The great breakthrough in philosophy of science and probability theory of recent years has been to isolate and make precise this criterion. Michael Behe's criterion of irreducible complexity for establishing the design of biochemical systems is a special case of the complexity-specification criterion for detecting design (cf. Behe's book *Darwin's Black Box*).

What does this criterion look like? Although a detailed explanation and justification is fairly technical (for a full account see my book *The Design Inference*, published by Cambridge University Press), the basic idea is straightforward and easily illustrated. Consider how the radio astronomers in the movie *Contact* detected an extraterrestrial intelligence. This movie, which came out last year and was based on a novel by Carl Sagan, was an enjoyable piece of propaganda for the SETI research program—the Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence. In the movie, the SETI researchers found extraterrestrial intelligence. (The nonfictional researchers have not been so successful.)

How, then, did the SETI researchers in *Contact* find an extraterrestrial intelligence? SETI researchers monitor millions of radio signals from outer space. Many natural objects in space (e.g., pulsars) produce radio waves. Looking for signs of design among all these naturally produced radio signals is like looking for a needle in a haystack. To sift through the haystack, SETI researchers run the signals they monitor through computers programmed with pattern-matchers. As long as a signal doesn't match one of the pre-set patterns, it will pass through the pattern-matching sieve (even if it has an intelligent source). If, on the other hand, it does match one of these patterns, then, depending on the pattern matched, the SETI researchers may have cause for celebration.

The SETI researchers in *Contact* found the following signal:



In this sequence of 1126 bits, 1's correspond to beats and 0's to pauses. This sequence represents the prime numbers from 2 to 101, where a given prime number is represented by the corresponding number of beats (i.e., 1's), and the individual prime numbers are separated by pauses (i.e., 0's).

The SETI researchers in *Contact* took this signal as decisive confirmation of an extraterrestrial intelligence. What is it about this signal that decisively in-

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dicates design? Whenever we infer design, we must establish two things—complexity and specification. Complexity ensures that the object in question is not so simple that it can readily be explained by chance. Specification ensures that this object exhibits the type of pattern that is the trademark of intelligence.

To see why complexity is crucial for inferring design, consider the following sequence of bits:

110111011111

These are the first twelve bits in the previous sequence representing the prime numbers 2, 3, and 5 respectively. Now it is a sure bet that no SETI researcher, if confronted with this twelve-bit sequence, is going to contact the science editor at the *New York Times*, hold a press conference, and announce that an extraterrestrial intelligence has been discovered. No headline is going to read, "Aliens Master First Three Prime Numbers!"

The problem is that this sequence is much too short (i.e., has too little complexity) to establish that an extraterrestrial intelligence with knowledge of prime numbers produced it. A randomly beating radio source might by chance just happen to put out the sequence "110111011111." A sequence of 1126 bits representing the prime numbers from 2 to 101, however, is a different story. Here the sequence is sufficiently long (i.e., has enough complexity) to confirm that an extraterrestrial intelligence could have produced it.

Even so, complexity by itself isn't enough to eliminate chance and indicate design. If I flip a coin 1,000 times, I'll participate in a highly complex (or what amounts to the same thing, highly improbable) event. Indeed, the sequence I end up flipping will be one in a trillion trillion trillion . . . , where the ellipsis needs twenty-two more "trillions." This sequence of coin tosses won't, however, trigger a design inference. Though complex, this sequence won't exhibit a suitable pattern. Contrast this with the sequence representing the prime numbers from 2 to 101. Not only is this sequence complex, it also embodies a suitable pattern. The SETI researcher who in the movie *Contact* discovered this sequence put it this way: "This isn't noise, this has structure."

What is a *suitable* pattern for inferring design? Not just any pattern will do. Some patterns can legitimately be employed to infer design whereas others cannot. It is easy to see the basic intuition here. Suppose an archer stands fifty meters from a large wall with bow and arrow in hand. The wall, let's say, is sufficiently large that the archer can't help but hit it. Now suppose each time the archer shoots an arrow at the wall, the archer paints a target around the arrow so that the arrow sits squarely in the bull's-eye. What can be concluded from this scenario? Absolutely nothing about the archer's ability as an archer. Yes, a pattern is being matched; but it is a pattern fixed only after the arrow has been shot. The pattern is thus purely ad hoc.

But suppose instead the archer paints a fixed target on the wall and then shoots at it. Suppose the archer shoots a hundred arrows, and each time hits a perfect bull's-eye. What can be concluded from this second scenario? Confronted with this second scenario we are obligated to infer that here is a world-class archer, one whose shots cannot legitimately be explained by luck, but rather must be explained by the archer's skill and mastery. Skill and mastery are of course instances of design.

Like the archer who fixes the target first and then shoots at it, statisticians set what is known as a *rejection region* prior to an experiment. If the outcome of an experiment falls within a rejection region, the statistician rejects the hypothesis that the outcome is due to chance. The pattern doesn't need to be given prior to an event to imply design. Consider the following cipher text:

nfuijolt ju jt mjlf b xfbtfm

Initially this looks like a random sequence of letters and spaces—initially you lack any pattern for rejecting chance and inferring design.

But suppose next that someone comes along and tells you to treat this sequence as a Caesar cipher, moving each letter one notch down the alphabet. Behold, the sequence now reads,

methinks it is like a weasel

Even though the pattern is now given after the fact, it still is the right sort of pattern for eliminating chance and inferring design. In contrast to statistics, which always tries to identify its patterns before an experiment is performed, cryptanalysis must discover its patterns after the fact. In both instances, however, the patterns are suitable for inferring design.

Patterns divide into two types, those that in the presence of complexity warrant a design inference and those that despite the presence of complexity do not warrant a design inference. The first type of pattern is called a *specification*, the second a *fabrication*. Specifications are the non-ad hoc patterns that can legitimately be used to eliminate chance and warrant a design inference. In contrast, fabrications are the ad hoc patterns that cannot legitimately be used to warrant a design inference. This distinction between specifications and fabrications can be made with full statistical rigor (cf. *The Design Inference*).

Why does the complexity-specification criterion reliably detect design? To answer this, we need to understand what it is about intelligent agents that makes them detectable in the first place. The principal characteristic of intelligent agency is choice.

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Whenever an intelligent agent acts, it chooses from a range of competing possibilities.

This is true not just of humans and extraterrestrial intelligences, but of animals as well. A rat navigating a maze must choose whether to go right or left at various points in the maze. When SETI researchers attempt to discover intelligence in the radio transmissions they are monitoring, they assume an extraterrestrial intelligence could have chosen to transmit any number of possible patterns, and then attempt to match the transmissions they observe with the patterns they seek. Whenever a human being utters meaningful speech, he chooses from a range of utterable sound-combinations. Intelligent agency always entails discrimination—choosing certain things, ruling out others.

Given this characterization of intelligent agency, how do we recognize that an intelligent agent has made a choice? A bottle of ink spills accidentally onto a sheet of paper; someone takes a fountain pen and writes a message on a sheet of paper. In both instances ink is applied to paper. In both instances one among an almost infinite set of possibilities is realized. In both instances one contingency is actualized and others are ruled out. Yet in one instance we ascribe agency, in the other chance.

What is the relevant difference? Not only do we need to observe that a contingency was actualized, but we ourselves need also to be able to specify that contingency. The contingency must conform to an independently given pattern, and we must be able independently to formulate that pattern. A random ink blot is unspecifiable; a message written with ink on paper is specifiable. Wittgenstein in *Culture and Value* made the same point: "We tend to take the speech of a Chinese for inarticulate gurgling. Someone who understands Chinese will recognize *language* in what he hears."

In hearing a Chinese utterance, someone who understands Chinese not only recognizes that one from a range of all possible utterances was actualized, but he is also able to identify the utterance as coherent Chinese speech. Contrast this with someone who does not understand Chinese. He will also recognize that one from a range of possible utterances was actualized, but this time, because he lacks the ability to understand Chinese, he is unable to tell whether the utterance was coherent speech.

To someone who does not understand Chinese, the utterance will appear gibberish. Gibberish—the utterance of nonsense syllables uninterpretable within any natural language—always actualizes one utterance from the range of possible utterances. Nevertheless, gibberish, by corresponding to nothing we can understand in any language, also cannot be specified. As a result, gibberish is never taken for intelligent communication, but always for what Wittgenstein calls "inarticulate gurgling."

Experimental psychologists who study animal learning and behavior employ a similar method. To learn a task an animal must acquire the ability to actualize behaviors suitable for the task as well as the ability to rule out behaviors unsuitable for the task. Moreover, for a psychologist to recognize that an animal has learned a task, it is necessary not only to observe the animal making the appropriate discrimination, but also to specify this discrimination.

Thus to recognize whether a rat has successfully learned how to traverse a maze, a psychologist must first specify which sequence of right and left turns conducts the rat out of the maze. No doubt, a rat randomly wandering a maze also discriminates a sequence of right and left turns. But by randomly wandering the maze, the rat gives no indication that it can discriminate the appropriate sequence of right and left turns for exiting the maze. Consequently, the psychologist studying the rat will have no reason to think the rat has learned how to traverse the maze. Only if the rat executes the sequence of right and left turns specified by the psychologist will the psychologist recognize that the rat has learned how to traverse the maze.

Note that complexity is implicit here as well. To see this, consider again a rat traversing a maze, but now take a very simple maze in which two right turns conduct the rat out of the maze. How will a psychologist studying the rat determine whether it has learned to exit the maze? Just putting the rat in the maze will not be enough. Because the maze is so simple, the rat could by chance just happen to take two right turns, and thereby exit the maze. The psychologist will therefore be uncertain whether the rat actually learned to exit this maze, or whether the rat just got lucky.

But contrast this now with a complicated maze in which a rat must take just the right sequence of left and right turns to exit the maze. Suppose the rat must take one hundred appropriate right and left turns, and that any mistake will prevent the rat from exiting the maze. A psychologist who sees the rat take no erroneous turns and in short order exit the maze will be convinced that the rat has indeed learned how to exit the maze, and that this was not dumb luck.

This general scheme for recognizing intelligent agency is but a thinly disguised form of the complexity-specification criterion. In general, to recognize intelligent agency we must observe a choice among competing possibilities, note which possibilities were not chosen, and then be able to specify the possibility that was chosen. What's more, the competing possibilities that were ruled out must be live possibilities, and sufficiently numerous (hence complex) so that specifying the possibility that was chosen cannot be attributed to chance.

All the elements in this general scheme for recognizing intelligent agency (i.e., choosing, ruling out,

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and specifying) find their counterpart in the complexity-specification criterion. It follows that this criterion formalizes what we have been doing right along when we recognize intelligent agency. The complexity-specification criterion pinpoints what we need to be looking for when we detect design.

Perhaps the most compelling evidence for design in biology comes from biochemistry. In a recent issue of *Cell* (February 8, 1998), Bruce Alberts, president of the National Academy of Sciences, remarked, "The entire cell can be viewed as a factory that contains an elaborate network of interlocking assembly lines, each of which is composed of large protein machines. . . . Why do we call the large protein assemblies that underlie cell function *machines*? Precisely because, like the machines invented by humans to deal efficiently with the macroscopic world, these protein assemblies contain highly coordinated moving parts."

Even so, Alberts sides with the majority of biologists in regarding the cell's marvelous complexity as only apparently designed. The Lehigh University biochemist Michael Behe disagrees. In *Darwin's Black Box* (1996), Behe presents a powerful argument for actual design in the cell. Central to his argument is his notion of *irreducible complexity*. A system is irreducibly complex if it consists of several interrelated parts so that removing even one part completely destroys the system's function. As an example of irreducible complexity Behe offers the standard mousetrap. A mousetrap consists of a platform, a hammer, a spring, a catch, and a holding bar. Remove any one of these five components, and it is impossible to construct a functional mousetrap.

Irreducible complexity needs to be contrasted with *cumulative complexity*. A system is cumulatively complex if the components of the system can be arranged sequentially so that the successive removal of components never leads to the complete loss of function. An example of a cumulatively complex system is a city. It is possible successively to remove people and services from a city until one is down to a tiny village—all without losing the sense of community, the city's "function."

From this characterization of cumulative complexity, it is clear that the Darwinian mechanism of natural selection and random mutation can readily account for cumulative complexity. Darwin's account of how organisms gradually become more complex as favorable adaptations accumulate is the flip side of the city in our example from which people and services are removed. In both cases, the simpler and more complex versions both work, only less or more effectively.

But can the Darwinian mechanism account for irreducible complexity? Certainly, if selection acts with reference to a goal, it can produce irreducible complexity. Take Behe's mousetrap. Given the goal of constructing a mousetrap, one can specify a goal-directed selection process that in turn selects a platform, a hammer, a spring, a catch, and a holding bar, and at the end puts all these components together to form a functional mousetrap. Given a pre-specified goal, selection has no difficulty producing irreducibly complex systems.

But the selection operating in biology is Darwinian natural selection. And by definition this form of selection operates without goals, has neither plan nor purpose, and is wholly undirected. The great appeal of Darwin's selection mechanism was, after all, that it would eliminate teleology from biology. Yet by making selection an undirected process, Darwin drastically reduced the type of complexity biological systems could manifest. Henceforth biological systems could manifest only cumulative complexity, not irreducible complexity.

As Behe explains in *Darwin's Black Box*, "An irreducibly complex system cannot be produced . . . by slight, successive modifications of a precursor system, because any precursor to an irreducibly complex system that is missing a part is by definition nonfunctional. . . . Since natural selection can only choose systems that are already working, then if a biological system cannot be produced gradually it would have to arise as an integrated unit, in one fell swoop, for natural selection to have anything to act on."

For an irreducibly complex system, function is attained only when all components of the system are in place simultaneously. It follows that natural selection, if it is going to produce an irreducibly complex system, has to produce it all at once or not at all. This would not be a problem if the systems in question were simple. But they're not. The irreducibly complex biochemical systems Behe considers are protein machines consisting of numerous distinct proteins, each indispensable for function; together they are beyond what natural selection can muster in a single generation.

One such irreducibly complex biochemical system that Behe considers is the bacterial flagellum. The flagellum is a whip-like rotary motor that enables a bacterium to navigate through its environment. The flagellum includes an acid-powered rotary engine, a stator, O-rings, bushings, and a drive shaft. The intricate machinery of this molecular motor requires approximately fifty proteins. Yet the absence of any one of these proteins results in the complete loss of motor function.

The irreducible complexity of such biochemical systems cannot be explained by the Darwinian mechanism, nor indeed by any naturalistic evolutionary mechanism proposed to date. Moreover, because irreducible complexity occurs at the biochemical level, there is no more fundamental level of biological analysis to which the irreducible complexity of bio-

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chemical systems can be referred, and at which a Darwinian analysis in terms of selection and mutation can still hope for success. Undergirding biochemistry is ordinary chemistry and physics, neither of which can account for biological information. Also, whether a biochemical system is irreducibly complex is a fully empirical question: Individually knock out each protein constituting a biochemical system to determine whether function is lost. If so, we are dealing with an irreducibly complex system. Experiments of this sort are routine in biology.

The connection between Behe's notion of irreducible complexity and my complexity-specification criterion is now straightforward. The irreducibly complex systems Behe considers require numerous components specifically adapted to each other and each necessary for function. That means they are complex in the sense required by the complexity-specification criterion.

Specification in biology always makes reference in some way to an organism's function. An organism is a functional system comprising many functional subsystems. The functionality of organisms can be specified in any number of ways. Arno Wouters does so in terms of the *viability* of whole organisms, Michael Behe in terms of the *minimal function* of biochemical systems. Even Richard Dawkins will admit that life is specified functionally, for him in terms of the *reproduction* of genes. Thus in *The Blind Watchmaker* Dawkins writes, "Complicated things have some quality, specifiable in advance, that is highly unlikely to have been acquired by random chance alone. In the case of living things, the quality that is specified in advance is . . . the ability to propagate genes in reproduction."

So there exists a reliable criterion for detecting design strictly from observational features of the world. This criterion belongs to probability and complexity theory, not to metaphysics and theology. And although it cannot achieve logical demonstration, it does achieve a statistical justification so compelling as to demand assent. This criterion is relevant to biology. When applied to the complex, information-rich structures of biology, it detects design. In particular, we can say with the weight of science behind us that the complexity-specification criterion shows Michael Behe's irreducibly complex biochemical systems to be designed.

What are we to make of these developments? Many scientists remain unconvinced. Even if we have a reliable criterion for detecting design, and even if that criterion tells us that biological systems are designed, it seems that determining a biological system to be designed is akin to shrugging our shoulders and saying God did it. The fear is that admitting design as an explanation will stifle scientific inquiry, that scientists will stop investigating difficult problems because they have a sufficient explanation already.

But design is not a science stopper. Indeed, design can foster inquiry where traditional evolutionary approaches obstruct it. Consider the term "junk DNA." Implicit in this term is the view that because the genome of an organism has been cobbled together through a long, undirected evolutionary process, the genome is a patchwork of which only limited portions are essential to the organism. Thus on an evolutionary view we expect a lot of useless DNA. If, on the other hand, organisms are designed, we expect DNA, as much as possible, to exhibit function. And indeed, the most recent findings suggest that designating DNA as "junk" merely cloaks our current lack of knowledge about function. For instance, in a recent issue of the *Journal of Theoretical Biology*, John Bodnar describes how "non-coding DNA in eukaryotic genomes encodes a language which programs organismal growth and development." Design encourages scientists to look for function where evolution discourages it.

Or consider vestigial organs that later are found to have a function after all. Evolutionary biology texts often cite the human coccyx as a "vestigial structure" that hearkens back to vertebrate ancestors with tails. Yet if one looks at a recent edition of *Gray's Anatomy*, one finds that the coccyx is a crucial point of contact with muscles that attach to the pelvic floor. The phrase "vestigial structure" often merely cloaks our current lack of knowledge about function. The human appendix, formerly thought to be vestigial, is now known to be a functioning component of the immune system.

Admitting design into science can only enrich the scientific enterprise. All the tried and true tools of science will remain intact. But design adds a new tool to the scientist's explanatory tool chest. Moreover, design raises a whole new set of research questions. Once we know that something is designed, we will want to know how it was produced, to what extent the design is optimal, and what is its purpose. Note that we can detect design without knowing what something was designed for. There is a room at the Smithsonian filled with objects that are obviously designed but whose specific purpose anthropologists do not understand.

Design also implies constraints. An object that is designed functions within certain constraints. Transgress those constraints and the object functions poorly or breaks. Moreover, we can discover those constraints empirically by seeing what does and doesn't work. This simple insight has tremendous implications not just for science but also for ethics. If humans are in fact designed, then we can expect psychosocial constraints to be hardwired into us. Transgress those constraints, and we as well as our society will suffer. There is plenty of empirical evidence to suggest that many of the attitudes and behaviors our society promotes undermine human flourishing. Design prom-

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ises to reinvigorate that ethical stream running from Aristotle through Aquinas known as natural law.

By admitting design into science, we do much more than simply critique scientific reductionism. Scientific reductionism holds that everything is reducible to scientific categories. Scientific reductionism is self-refuting and easily seen to be self-refuting. The existence of the world, the laws by which the world operates, the intelligibility of the world, and the unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics for comprehending the world are just a few of the questions that science raises, but that science is incapable of answering.

Simply critiquing scientific reductionism, however, is not enough. Critiquing reductionism does nothing to change science. And it is science that must change. By eschewing design, science has for too long operated with an inadequate set of conceptual categories. This has led to a constricted vision of reality, skewing how science understands not just the world, but also human beings.

Martin Heidegger remarked in *Being and Time* that "a science's level of development is determined by the extent to which it is *capable* of a crisis in its basic concepts." The basic concepts with which science has operated these last several hundred years are no longer adequate, certainly not in an information age, certainly not in an age where design is empirically detectable. Science faces a crisis of basic concepts. The way out of this crisis is to expand science to include design. To admit design into science is to liberate science, freeing it from restrictions that can no longer be justified. FT

Monthly Communion

At church, the man touches his lover's
hand: two crisscrossed
in the cross, signing
symbols in unison. They are unhappy

with Worship, the servings up
of Christ: too scattered
to soothe their weekly palates. At the potluck
afterwards, they steam,

recite the Last Supper like apostles
replaying the night. In the church
kitchen, incandescent lights
halo their greying heads. The eldest sputters

how the last "place" vacuumed up
their savior from the rug; his voice
vrooms the story; casserole crumbs flutter
from his lips. I, too, am hungry

for more, the pierced flesh
corrupting beneath tongue
each week we forget
to remember. What else

we forget wavers between air
and faith: words tossed out
with the wafer. Here, confession clears
sooner than incense. Oh, Christ,

what lives we have chosen to live:
we come still to the fodder of your flesh
needing figleaves, licking our gaping sores
as if we were clean.

Marjorie Maddox

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In Defense of Disbelief

Ralph C. Wood

A healthy dose of Christian disbelief or "holy skepticism" would serve as a much-needed antidote to the soft-core spirituality that saps much of contemporary Christianity, especially in its evangelical expression. An anti-doctrinal sentimentality often rules the worship and the art of our churches, where self-serving emotions are exalted over true mystery. The church of our time needs a theology that repudiates all saccharine substitutes for the hard thinking that Christian faith requires.

As in so many other matters, Flannery O'Connor foresaw our reduction of transcendent faith to sentimental subjectivity. She likened it to the scientific process whereby the wings can be bred off chickens to produce more succulent white meat. O'Connor said that it is possible to breed the moral and theological sense out of people in a similar way. She described our current generation as a brood of wingless chickens. This is what Nietzsche meant, she explained, when he declared God dead. It also means that nihilism is the atmosphere of our age, the gas that we all breathe, whether inside or outside the Church. The Church has made Christianity nearly indistinguishable from the coziness of a warm blanket and the kindliness of a golden heart. With typical starchiness, O'Connor added that "a golden heart would be a positive interference for the writing of fiction."

What sustains both faith and fiction against such incipient nihilism is Christian disbelief. O'Connor explained the need for religious skepticism in a letter to an Emory University freshman named Alfred Corn, later to become a distinguished poet and anthologist. This shy student had written in 1955 to say that he was vexed by the intellectual doubts his professors had created. Their questions had put his faith in terrible jeopardy, and he asked O'Connor what he should do. To believe in God, she replied, is not to avoid such doubts and difficulties but to undergo a lifelong combat with them. Faith is indeed a gift, she added, but it is a gift that must be constantly cultivated and enlarged. Faith grows and deepens through concrete acts of charity, she explained. These deeds are prompted, in turn, by a discernment of the divine image in other persons. Only sacred sight can perceive their true worth. Such holy seeing is invigorated by imaginative more than abstract thinking. O'Connor concludes her letter with splendidly keen counsel:

> Even in the life of a Christian, faith rises and falls like the tides of an invisible sea. [Faith is still] there, even when [you] can't see it or feel it, if [you want] it to be there. You realize, I think, that [faith] is more valuable, more mysterious, altogether more immense than anything you can learn or decide upon in college. Learn what you can, but cultivate Christian skepticism. It will keep you free—not free to do anything you please, but free to be formed by something larger than your own intellect or the intellects of those around you.

O'Connor believed that Christian dogma is what forms the Christian imagination into something larger than our own intelligence or the intelligence of those around us. Knowing that the word "dogma" is a pejorative term for most Americans, O'Connor boldly capitalized it, confessing in the upper case that "My stories have been watered and fed by Dogma." She rejected the popular view that dogma divides while ethics unite and that, since the practical and the useful are what truly matter, we can dispense with dogma. So long as everyone loves Jesus, according to the prevailing sentimentalism, doctrinal claims can be shelved. O'Connor believed,

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on the contrary, that dogma must be central rather than peripheral. It is the distilled essence of God's self-identification in Israel and Christ, and thus the true means for understanding both ourselves and the world. "Dogma is an instrument for penetrating reality," she declared. It "is about the only thing left in the world that surely guards and respects mystery."

For Flannery O'Connor, "mystery" is not synonymous with "puzzle" and "riddle"—for those conundrums that balk the mind and stifle all understanding. Nor is mystery another name for a spirituality so vague that it cannot distinguish between John of the Cross and Max Lucado. "To St. Paul and the early Christian thinkers," wrote Claude Tresmontant, one of O'Connor's favorite biblical scholars, "[mystery] was on the contrary the particular object of intelligence, its fullest nourishment. The *musterion* [a Greek word that can also be translated *sacrament*] is something so rich in intelligible content, so inexhaustibly full of delectation for the mind that no contemplation [of it] can ever reach its end."

Such delectations of mind and imagination also require Christians to make unmistakable declarations about what we do not believe. We cannot avoid the fact that Christian faith is inherently polemical. Every doctrinal claim implies its counterclaim, every affirmation its negation. Karl Barth learned this lesson in his encounter with the Nazis, who pronounced his writings illegal and who banned him from teaching in German universities. In response to the Nazi evils, Barth led the Confessing Church to develop the Barmen Declaration, a document wherein every *credimus* [we believe] is followed by its corollary *damnamus* [we reject]. The first article, for example, declares that "Jesus Christ, as he is attested for us in Holy Scripture, is the one Word of God which we have to hear and which we have to trust and obey in life and in death." Lest the *Deutsche Christen* of the Nazi church (or anyone else) mistake what this means, a clear reference to *der Führer* follows: "We reject the false doctrine [that] the Church could and would have to acknowledge as a source of its proclamation, apart from and besides this one Word of God, still other events, powers, figures, and truths as God's revelation."

Perhaps we need a new Barmen Declaration for Christian faith and writing in our time, a theological manifesto setting forth the things we do not and will not believe, precisely because we believe in Jesus Christ. The theologian Christopher Morse has developed such a theology for the Church amidst its current *status confessionis*. In *Not Every Spirit: A Dogmatics of Christian Disbelief* (1994), Morse argues that faithful skepticism is a biblical no less than an ecclesial imperative. Already in the New Testament it is made evident. "Beloved, do not believe every spirit," we read in 1 John 4:1, "but test the spirits to see whether they are of God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world." The Gospel of Mark shares this same disdain for untrue claimants to the Truth: "And then if anyone says, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it. False Christs and false prophets will arise and show signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect" (13:21-22). If even an angel from heaven should preach a false gospel, says St. Paul, "let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:9).

These unspecified deceiving spirits and false prophets and fake Christs are to be broadly understood, Morse claims, as anyone or anything making wrongful claims to our attention and allegiance. Christians are called to name these Antichrists and to refuse them our fealty—even as we are also required to disbelieve those dogmas that have ossified into lifeless propositions. Yet Christian disbelief does not mean a principled doubting of everything. Such radical skepticism soon slides into a cynicism altogether as sentimental and self-serving as the easy optimism it rejects. Christian disbelief is, instead, a positive testing of what is true and false by a single criterion: "By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit which does not confess Jesus is not of God" (1 John 4:2-3).

There are many so-called Christian "spirits" now at work in our churches which deny that "Jesus Christ has come in the flesh." These gnostic and discarnate forms of Christianity are especially evident in the sappiness of what passes as contemporary Christian culture. This is not to say that sentimental piety always produces flaccid faith. There are many staunch witnesses to the gospel who are sustained by art more saccharine than sacred, and by worship more superficial than substantial. Such devout souls live out their Christianity in ways that transcend the limits of their piety, even as many of us academics must be saved in spite of our better taste and more orthodox theology. Yet the spiritual outrages being committed in the name of Christ cannot be dismissed as mere passing fads. They have come virtually to dominate the evangelical Protestant world.

Consider the following examples from a so-called Christian Book Fair. A T-shirt company called Living Epistles advertised a sweatshirt labeled "The Lord's Gym." It featured not Arnold Schwarzenegger but Jesus Christ as the pumped-up, steroid-loaded body builder. He is pressing himself up on a pile of rocks, blood gushing from his crown of thorns, with an enormous cross on his back that reads "The Sins of the World." The caption beneath dares us to "Bench Press This!" On the other side of the shirt, Jesus' palm is pierced with a railroad spike and covered in blood. Inscribed beneath are the words "His Pain, Your Gain." Other T-shirts shout such slogans as "Salvation Is Not for Wimps," "Jesus Loved You So Much it *Hurt*!", "His Blood's for You," and "God Made Grandmas So Kids Could Feel His Hugs."

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Bumper stickers declare that "Real Men Love Jesus" and "My Boss Is a Jewish Carpenter." A key-chain featuring a soccer ball contains the slogan "Jesus Is My Goal."

Such spiritual pap can be made to fill even book-sized containers. Consider, for example, one of the fair's prize-winning titles: *Lord, I Haven't Talked to You Since the Last Crisis.* Another much-touted work, *Jesus Christ, CEO,* describes our Lord as an executive who turned twelve ordinary men into managers of the most successful company the world has ever known. A fresh infusion of Christian skepticism would disdain such books, even as it would help deliver publishers from the temptation to get rich by manufacturing toilet tissue with the words "Get Thee Behind Me, Satan" printed on every sheet.

There are many other examples of Christian kitsch. At an Easter service held in a South Carolina Baptist church, puppets popped up from behind a screen and wagged their muppety heads while singing "I Found My Thrill on Calvary Hill" to the old Fats Domino tune. Twenty miles south of Nashville, a Christian entrepreneur named Charles Budell has set up a miniature golf course in which windmills and water-hazards have been replaced by biblical obstacles. There Christian golfers can tee off at the Garden of Eden, get past the Devil, and end up in Heaven. Along the way, one putts into Noah's Ark, drops onto Mt. Sinai, and visits the tomb of Christ. On the seventeenth hole, the ball disappears into a shaft with Satan's picture on it, only to emerge beneath a red cross. "See," says Budell, "you beat the Devil." Angels are seated near the seventeenth hole, where the ball sinks into an opening with the word RAPTURE emblazoned above it.

One might argue that such gross parodies of the gospel are too silly to be dignified with criticism. The atrocious sacrileges of so-called Christian culture would be laughable indeed were their effects not so deadly. T. S. Eliot once observed that our unconscious habits, especially our leisure lives, serve to shape our souls and form our imaginations far more decisively than all our deliberate efforts to acquire high culture. Neil Postman's argument about America at large is even more alarmingly true of our evangelical churches: we are amusing ourselves to death. The Christian culture critic Ken Myers, editor of Mars Hill Tapes, rightly describes popular Christianity as being "of the world, but not in the world." It espouses a worldly gospel of happiness and success that offers no serious engagement with the deepest needs and desires of the world.

This sub-Christian religion devoted not to the Fatherhood but the Daddyhood of God—a friend of mine calls it Kiddyanity—can be seen most vigorously at work in contemporary worship. There is no doubt that its emotional fervor serves to indict the Laodicean lifelessness of much traditional worship. Seeker services aim at introducing the unchurched masses of our post-Christian culture to the rudiments of the faith, teaching them the elementary truths of the gospel in ways that liturgical worship and doctrinal preaching might not. Yet I wonder whether childlike beginners in a dumbed-down, user-friendly Christianity will ever grow up—whether such seekers will ever become finders and keepers of the faith once delivered to the saints. It is more likely, I fear, that they will subject themselves to apostolic wrath. St. Paul warns against a permanent infancy in faith. He pronounces fierce judgment on the Corinthians who remain milk-drinking believers, never learning to eat the rich meat and to quaff the good wine of the gospel.

This new ease in Zion, this friendly familiarity with the Lord God of the cosmos, can be discerned in old-fashioned liberal no less than new-fangled evangelical churches. Edward Farley has recently declared that the relevance-driven worship practiced in old-line liberal congregations prompts one not to exclaim "holy, holy, holy" but "nice, nice, nice." In his book *A Far Glory,* Peter Berger argues that we are witnessing "the triumph of triviality" even in traditional churches. With the anger of an Amos, Berger laments the frontal hugs that would bring sexual harassment charges in other settings, the vigorous applause that follows the choir or the soloist's performance (as if the true audience were not God but the congregation), the raucous laughter that the preacher's well-rehearsed one-liners evoke. "Sermons [in such churches] are political harangues," Berger complains, "and 'prayers' the recital of political platforms." Hence Berger's bitter litany of liturgical offenses.

> One could go on: To the embarrassed handshakes mislabeled "the kiss of peace." To the preacher mounting the pulpit in full sacerdotal regalia, only to begin his sermon with a hearty "good morning." To the dedicated removal of every vestige of poetic beauty from the language of the liturgy . . . into prose resembling that of a mail-order catalogue. I think that what all these changes add up to is the statement that nothing extraordinary is going on, that what is happening is a gathering of ordinary people enjoying the experience of community.

Such loss of awe and mystery, such commodification of God into the service of our own needs, flattens the imagination of wonder and otherness. If God is only a kinder and gentler version of ourselves, there is nothing ultimate to inspire our worship or command our service. No wonder that Flannery O'Connor likened sentimentality in religion to pornography in art: they both cultivate immediate sensate experience for its own sake. In a similar way the poet and mystical writer Kathleen Norris protests the re-

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moval of the fierce psalms of lament and imprecation from contemporary lectionaries. These cursing psalms remind us, says Norris, that wickedness cannot be conquered by mere niceness. Without anger, she adds, even the praise of God dissolves into a "dreadful cheer," a smiling blindness to the world's woe, a gleaming-gummed oblivion to what Luther called the bruised human conscience.

Leander Keck complains in a similar vein that our churches have replaced "the theocentric praise of God" with an "anthropocentric utilitarianism." This inversion serves to tame and domesticate the living Lord of Scripture by ridding him of his jealousy and wrath. God is "reduced to the Great Enabler [who] has little to do except [to] warrant our causes and help us fulfill our aspirations." Hence Keck's baleful assessment of contemporary Christianity: "The opening line of the Westminster Confession is now reversed, for now the chief end of God is to glorify us and to be useful to us indefinitely."

Perhaps the subtlest manifestation of sentimentality is to be found in the triumph of the word "spirituality" in Christian discourse. At its best, this new concern with the spiritual life reflects a laudable desire to make Christian faith a matter of the heart no less than the head, a discipline of devotional practices rather than a repetition of doctrinal propositions. Though he prefers the older word "piety"—with its deep rootage in Roman history and Calvinist theology—J. I. Packer offers a succinct positive definition of Christian spirituality as an "enquiry into the whole Christian enterprise of pursuing, achieving, and cultivating communion with God, which includes both public worship and private devotion, and the results of these in actual Christian life."

If at its noblest the spirituality movement serves to revitalize Christian devotion, why substitute a name so gaseous and gossamer that it means nearly everything and therefore hardly anything? Are the practitioners of spirituality to be regarded as *spiritualists*, and thus as adepts in *spiritualism*? Will seances and necromancy soon follow? We entangle ourselves in such questions whenever we seek to avoid the offense of the gospel, its scandalous particularity and finality, its thorny refusal to be made one faith among others.

With uncanny prescience, C. S. Lewis anticipated our current obsession with spirituality. In his space novel of 1944 called *Perelandra*, Lewis depicts his demonic scientist Weston as an advocate of an immanentist life-worship that has remarkable parallels to contemporary spirituality. Weston has contempt for the notion of a transcendent God who creates and judges and redeems the world. He will have nothing to do with the incarnate Lord who requires that we worship him rather than his creation, who commands that we live not for this world alone but for the Life beyond life. Weston's anti-theistic philosophy proves predictably anti-humanistic, as the denial of God issues in hatred of humanity. Weston worships not God but the unsupervised and impersonal life-process. He scorns "mere" humanity in the name of a vitalism as vacuous in its rhetoric as it is vicious in its ethics:

> The majestic spectacle of this blind, inarticulate purposiveness thrusting its way upward and ever upward in an endless unity of differentiated achievements towards an ever-increasing complexity of organization, towards spontaneity and *spirituality*, swept away all my old conception of a duty to Man as such. Man in himself is nothing. The forward movement of Life—the growing *spirituality*—is everything. . . . To spread *spirituality*, not to spread the human race, is henceforth my mission. (Emphasis added.)

Our rampant desire to reduce knotty particularities to spongy generalities has led a cynical friend to confess that he grabs first for his wife and then for his wallet when he hears this gnostic word "spirituality." William Temple spoke similar wisdom when he declared Christianity to be the world's most *materialistic* religion. Redemption is an outward and public and visible thing wrought by the flesh-assuming, world-inhabiting God. The objective work of Jesus Christ is the center of the Christian life, upon which all subjective conversions are based, themselves enabled by God's own gift of faith. Our "decisions for Christ" announce that our faith is indeed intentional; it is uniquely ours, not just the product of our parents or the community that nurtured us. Yet even the deepest personal encounter with God can never be commensurate with the gift of salvation itself. An evangelical reporter is said to have asked Karl Barth, when he was visiting this country in 1962, whether he had ever been saved. "Yes," Barth is rumored to have replied. "Then tell us about your salvation experience," the reporter eagerly requested. "It happened in A.D. 34, when Jesus was crucified and God raised him from the dead."

Those who have turned the WWJD acronym into a fashion item—donning decorative wear that asks What Would Jesus Do?—ignore this fundamental distinction between Christ's objective work and our subjective appropriation of it. As the Son of God slain for the sins of the world, Jesus has a life qualitatively different from ours. To ask what Jesus would do is to assume that we are his qualitative equal. The theologian Diogenes Allen puts the matter exactly the other way around. He starkly observes that, in a certain sense, Christ does not need us: "Jesus is Lord because of who he is, not because he has followers. . . . He is Lord because he is the Son of God. It isn't because of us that he is the Son of God." A more faithful question needs to be asked, even if it cannot be re-

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duced to an acronymn: "What does Jesus Christ, because of his unique life and death and resurrection, uniquely enable his disciples to do?" The difficult answer is that he is the only Savior who, having accomplished their redemption, enables his followers to do works even greater than his own (John 14:12). Like the Baptizer in Grünewald's Isenheim Altarpiece—the long-fingered prophet who points away from himself to the crucified God—we can make witness, in both word and deed, to the salvation that we ourselves could not possibly have accomplished.

The recrudescent nineteenth-century theology of Christian subjectivism finds its literary equivalent in the current Christian chic of salvation through autobiography alone. Thus the current rage for telling one's own story as if it were God's story—when, by contrast, we are called to *conform* our fallen and false stories to God's one true Story. An important Christian writer recently declared, when asked about the sources of her art, that she writes entirely out of her own experience—her family, her friends, her church. Another avowedly Christian author confesses that doctrine no longer matters to her. She finds her audience in the many Christians who gather to praise Jesus without squabbling over their beliefs. Surely this is to forget that the gospel liberates us from subjective emotionalism, giving us new lenses for perceiving both ourselves and our world, delivering us into the great unexplored realm of the Not Merely Me. Luther in his 1535 lectures on Galatians declared that the gospel of God "snatches us away from ourselves, so that we do not depend on our own strength, conscience, experience, person, or works, but depend on that which is outside ourselves, that is, on the promise and truth of God, which cannot deceive." Christian art consists not in the transmission of often deceptive autobiographical experience into fictional guise, but rather its radical transfiguration into the one undeceiving form: the form of the Cross and Resurrection.

Christopher Morse cites Matthew's inclusion of the Old Testament figure of Rachel right in the midst of the Christmas story as an example of such cruciform narrative art. "Along with the sound of wise men and shepherds, of the angels and all the heavenly host praising God and singing," writes Morse, "there is this other sound—the sound of 'a voice heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more.'"

In the Genesis narratives, Rachel is depicted as the mother of Jacob's last two and most beloved sons, Joseph and Benjamin. Her life had begun brightly when Jacob kissed her and wept for gladness at finding a Hebrew woman to marry amidst the unwanted Canaanite women. Yet Rachel's lot in life soon proved unhappy. Not only did her father Laban inveigle Jacob into marrying her sister Leah, but Rachel's long-deferred marriage to Jacob remained childless for many years. The fertile Leah was a reproach to her, having borne Jacob eight sons. At last God took away Rachel's shame by giving her Joseph, the future rescuer of his family. But in bringing Benjamin into the world, Rachel "travailed, and she had hard labor," as Genesis 35:17 bluntly states. She died in childbirth and was buried by the roadside. Jeremiah remembers Rachel's grave alongside the path the Israelites took into exile, and he hears her still refusing all consolation. Like these exiled children of Abraham who have no prospect of returning, her children are no more.

Yet Jeremiah also hears the voice of comfort addressed to Rachel and to all who suffer with her. "Thus says the Lord: 'Keep your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears. . . . There is hope for your future'" (Jeremiah 31:16-17). It is this hope that Matthew picks up from Jeremiah. Herod has slaughtered all the young sons of Israel, and yet there is hope for all the world's Rachels in this singular Child who has been spared. But it is a dark kind of hope, a hope that points (as Luther saw) to this same Son who will be forsaken on the Cross. This is no easy consolation, no sweet and sentimental assurance that everything will work out well. It is the faith that begins in disbelief, in the rejection of all false comfort. "By not believing in any consolation short of God's own descent into hell in Christ," Morse declares, "the refusal of Rachel becomes a faithful witness pointing to the Resurrection." God alone, the God of Golgotha, can provide solace that is not saccharine. All surrogate hopes must be disbelieved.

Peter De Vries' novels give fictional life to the disbelief that eschews oleaginous substitutes. I am not here claiming De Vries to be a Christian in what he affirmed, only in what he negated—namely, in his refusal to be cozily consoled when the children were no more. Many of De Vries' readers know that his most celebrated novel, *The Blood of the Lamb* (1962), has autobiographical origins. Both De Vries' sister and his own daughter died young. After his sister's death, he once told me, his mother refused ever again to sing in church. Yet their minister, in making a pastoral call, had the gall to inquire about her silence, failing to see that this Dutch-immigrant mother was a latter-day Rachel, refusing to be comforted by anyone but God—and perhaps not even by him. De Vries lets his mother's voice be heard when his narrator, Don Wanderhope, loses his own brother to pneumonia. In the novel as in life, a minister has come to proffer the hope that Wanderhope knows to be bogus. He will not take solace in a God whose sovereignty makes him the direct cause of every occurrence, both human and natural. Hence Wanderhope's poignant wail of disbelief:

> My sensation, rather than fear or piety, was a baffled and uncomprehending rage. That flesh

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> with which I had lain in comradely embrace [was] destroyable, on such short notice, by a whim known as divine? . . . Who wantonly scattered such charm, who broke such flesh like bread for his purposes?

When Wanderhope's own daughter Carol dies of leukemia at age eleven, his disbelief is no longer partial but total. He refuses to find any relief in the notion that her death is the work of God's beneficent will. Instead, he engages in his own willful inversion of the central Christian claims. It is not Christ who is slain from the foundation of the world for the sins of the world, but little Carol herself who is the innocent creature needlessly destroyed. The fountain filled with blood has been drawn not from Emmanuel's but from this helpless child's veins. Wanderhope thus addresses the dying Carol as his "lamb," and he strokes her hair as "precious fleece." He describes her needle marks and incisions as "stigmata." Carol dies at the very hour when other children are frolicking their way home from school, even as it is also the hour of Christ's death: three o'clock in the afternoon. The abandonment that occurred at Calvary may not have been the great act of substitutionary atonement wrought by God in Christ, De Vries suggests, but a fearful sign of God's perpetual truancy amidst human anguish.

One wonders whether De Vries the ex-Calvinist might have been rescued from such horrible fears if he had been taught a doctrine of divine sovereignty that did not insist on God's omnicausality. Calvin chose his adjective carefully when he declared that "All events are governed by God's secret plan." That God's providential will for the world is not transparent but hidden from human sight requires that we walk by faith, that we struggle through the valley of doubt as well as the shadow of death. Yet if God's work were completely concealed, human history and individual life would be random and rudderless, the chaotic product of an accidental universe. Both Catholic Scholasticism and Protestant Orthodoxy sought to steer a middle course between such false notions of divine transparency and divine opacity by insisting on the distinction between first and second causes. God's primary will does indeed superintend the working of all things together for good (Romans 8:28). Yet there are secondary causes—both natural and human, at once free and contingent and necessary—that may temporarily deflect even if they do not finally defeat God's providence. Sentimental Christianity spurns this distinction, trying instead to make evident the God who remains hidden even in his incarnation. It encourages either cozy feelings of assurance that the Lord makes everything work to our benefit, or else cozy communities assured that they are God's only hands and feet in the work of peace and justice. Christian disbelief disavows both sentimentalities.

Even with sentimentalism set aside, we are still left to deal with the terrible death of Carol Wanderhope. In the scene that follows it, De Vries hints at the one true way to avoid the twin evils of divine omnicausality and godless accidentality. Don Wanderhope had bought a cake for Carol's birthday, but he had inadvertently left it in the Catholic church where, on the way to the hospital, he had stopped to say one last desperate prayer for her recovery. Staggering both from grief and from the liquor he has drunk to numb it, Don remembers the cake. He returns to the church to get it. In a gesture of pure metaphysical fury, Wanderhope flings the confection in the face of the crucifix hanging over the church door. Yet just as Jeremiah hears God answering the inconsolable Rachel, so does De Vries reveal a strange solace in this act of defiance. A bleary-eyed Wanderhope sees Christ wiping the icing from his eyes "very slowly, very deliberately, with infinite patience. . . . Then the cheeks were wiped down with the same sense of grave and gentle ritual, with all the kind sobriety of one whose voice could be heard saying, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me . . . for such is the kingdom of heaven.'"

Just as Jacob wrestles with the angel all night until he has been blessed, even if his battle with God leaves him permanently lamed; as Jeremiah protests that God absconds behind the blank wall of Israel's exile; as the Psalmist laments that the wicked prosper while the faithful and the righteous languish; as Koheleth complains that life is a great weariness under a sun that also rises and also goes down without producing anything new; as Job angrily contends with the God who has subjected him to unspeakable suffering without due cause; even as Rachel mourns in Ramah that her children are no more—so does Peter De Vries have his characters decline all comfort that is not real comfort. Don Wanderhope refuses to believe that his daughter's death is either the mechanical execution of a divine plan or the random result of godless chance. His encounter with the cake-spattered Christ suggests, instead, that God has strangely subjected himself to the sin and rage of his people. This is indeed a dark revelation, and De Vries claimed to be no more than a backslidden unbeliever. Yet his fiction makes powerful witness against the soggy spirituality of our age, confronting us with a Cross which demands our disbelief in all sentimental substitutes. FT

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Review Essay

Popes for All Seasons

Thomas F. X. Noble

GOD'S REPRESENTATIVES: THE EIGHT TWENTIETH-CENTURY POPES. By JAMES BENTLEY. *Constable. 200 pp. £16.95.*

SAINTS AND SINNERS: A HISTORY OF THE POPES. By EAMON DUFFY. *Yale University Press. 326 pp. $30.*

THE PAPACY. By PAUL JOHNSON. Edited by MICHAEL WALSH. *Wiedenfeld and Nicholson. 224 pp. £25.*

GREGORY THE GREAT AND HIS WORLD. By ROBERT MARKUS. *Cambridge University Press. 264 pp. $59.95.*

CHRONICLE OF THE POPES: THE REIGN-BY-REIGN RECORD OF THE PAPACY FROM ST. PETER TO THE PRESENT. By P. G. MAXWELL-STUART. *Thames and Hudson. 240 pp. $29.95.*

LIVES OF THE POPES: THE PONTIFFS FROM ST. PETER TO JOHN PAUL II. By RICHARD MCBRIEN. *HarperSan Francisco. 520 pp. $29.50.*

The year 1997 was an annus mirabilis in papal history. Not because the Holy Father did anything more mirabilis than he usually does, but because no fewer than six substantial books treating papal history appeared in English alone. These books invite reflection on how to think about papal history, and on what, exactly, papal history is.

In the nineteenth century Leopold von Ranke, best known for saying that history could be written *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist* ("as it actually happened"), ostentatiously took on a history of the papacy in the Reformation period to prove that his objectivity would permit him, good Protestant that he was, to tell the story with Olympian objectivity. On concluding his work he said, with wry irony, that after all the dust of all the wars had finally cleared one would still see the outline of the Vatican against the glimmer of the morning sun. The papacy was here to stay. But what did that mean? Then? Now?

In the early years of the sixth century an anonymous writer in Rome began to compile a biographical record of the Popes. His work, still readable as the *Liber Pontificalis* (more or less, "The Book of the Popes") and now available in a wonderful, and helpfully annotated, English translation by Raymond Davis, established definitively one way of thinking about papal history, as a succession of individual lives or pontificates running from St. Peter to the reigning Pope. The original version of the *Liber Pontificalis* was continued contemporaneously until the end of the ninth century. Then, for reasons we still do not understand, the book was closed until the eleventh century when it was begun again and carried on intermittently until the late Middle Ages. Scholars wrangle learnedly, in ways that make the public decline to read history, about this enigmatic and informative text. But it did establish definitively the biographical approach.

The papacy is also an idea. The idea was articulated for the first time by Christ himself in the sixteenth chapter of Matthew's Gospel: "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." These words did not create a papacy but they did create the possibility of a Petrine mission in the Church. For two millennia the successors of Peter have sought ways to make that mission real and effective in the Christian world.

Finally, the papacy is an institution. Obviously Peter did not have a bank, a diplomatic corps, an army of assistants, a radio station, a newspaper, or

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(for Pete's sake) a web page. But within a century of Peter's death the Roman church had begun to evolve a cadre of officials who assisted the local bishop in administering the local church and in maintaining that church's relations with other Christian communities.

Men, ideas, and institutions, then, are the raw materials out of which papal history is built. But the papacy is the oldest institution in the world. First in the Mediterranean world, then in Europe, and then all around the globe papal history has influenced, and has been influenced by, all the other histories that can be told. The sheer staying power of the papacy commands respect, admiration, and curiosity. But Ranke knew that already when the United States was less than a century old, when modern France and Germany had not been invented, when Russia still had czars and serfs, and when emperors ruled China.

The books under consideration here represent well the various customary approaches to papal history. Three are, after the fashion of the *Liber Pontificalis*, biographical: Richard McBrien's *Lives of the Popes*; P. G. Maxwell-Stuart's *Chronicle of the Popes*; and James Bentley's *God's Representatives: The Eight Twentieth-Century Popes*. Robert Markus' *Gregory the Great and His World* is biographical in a strict sense, while Eamon Duffy's *Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes* and Paul Johnson's *The Papacy* are general histories. Let's begin with a few general observations about each of these books and then turn to the larger and more interesting question of how they help or hinder the interested reader's quest to come to grips with a long and complicated story. Markus' and Duffy's books I can recommend with enthusiasm. The former is a beautifully written, learned but accessible, balanced treatment of an immensely significant pontificate—Gregory I (590-604) is one of only two Popes universally called "the Great"—and of an engaging human being. Duffy, a rare bird in that he is a Catholic with no axe to grind, prepared his book in connection with a British television series on the papacy. Duffy resisted any temptation to trivialize his subject and produced the most readable, comprehensive, and level-headed single-volume history of the papacy apart from Horst Fuhrmann's outstanding *Von Petrus zu Johannes Paulus II* (second edition in 1984 and, alas, still without an English translation). Duffy's book is beautifully illustrated, and the pictures chosen are both contemporary with the matters under discussion and key parts of the narrative.

Two books I can dismiss promptly: Bentley's and Johnson's. The former is just the tonic for fire-breathing Pope-haters of seventeenth-century intensity. If you prize fairness and sensitivity, give Bentley a pass. The latter is a curious grab-bag that is neither scholarly, nor complete, nor readable. It is actually a set of essays edited by Michael Walsh with a very brief contribution by Johnson himself. Some of the authors are well-known, some obscure. The volume lacks focus and consistency of themes and organization. Even Paul Johnson fans may safely ignore this book.

Maxwell-Stuart's book is lively, readable, lavishly illustrated, and packed with useful tables, charts, documents, and maps. Of the books under review, this one is the most fun to rummage around in. The author divides papal history into several chronological sections and opens each section with an essay on that period's major historical features. Often, but not always or equally helpfully, Maxwell-Stuart situates papal history within larger historical contexts; Duffy, by comparison, is excellent on this account. Maxwell-Stuart devotes a scant twenty-four pages to the period from 1769 to the present and his individual sections are oddly disparate. That is, one cannot easily follow any particular theme in papal history through this book's pages.

Finally, there is McBrien's offering, which he candidly admits is a spin-off from his 1995 *Harper-Collins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*. This volume is even more of a dictionary than Maxwell-Stuart's although it also has occasional essays introducing major periods and a few poorly reproduced pictures that are more decorative than illuminating. McBrien has lists of "Outstanding Popes," "Good or Above Average Popes," and "Worst Popes"; major encyclicals; papal firsts and lasts; a concise discussion of papal electoral procedures; and a glossary. McBrien's reputation will draw attention to this book. Natural curiosity will attract readers to the lists. An uninformed public will be misled by them. Once again, this book's encyclopedic approach obscures trends that played out over time. But McBrien's volume is somewhat more biographical than Maxwell-Stuart's in that he routinely provides basic details about the life of each pontiff; Maxwell-Stuart often contents himself with only the major events of a pontificate. As a basic reference tool, no one has improved on the readability or scholarship of J. N. D. Kelly, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Popes* (1986). Indeed, McBrien acknowledges Kelly as a prime source for his own book. Expressed as an equation, Kelly equals McBrien minus the sneering and sniping.

Historians either discover new things or argue with each other. Among these books, only Markus' really says anything new. Because he focuses on only one reign, however, I shall not draw him into the conversation. If the other books say little that is new, only Duffy's occasionally, but never obtrusively, enters into historical debates. Yet this is not to say that the books are equally objective and reliable. McBrien's, in particular, is relentlessly tendentious. A few examples will serve to establish the character of these volumes.

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Pope Leo I (440-461) was antiquity's greatest spokesman for the supremacy of the papal office. He was, says Maxwell-Stuart, "a man who had no doubts that he was exercising the full authority of St. Peter as transmitted to the bishops of Rome, and that this authority overrode that of all other patriarchs and bishops." That is a fair statement, but the reader is not prepared for it by antecedent reflections on earlier papal pronouncements. Although McBrien sometimes will mention earlier statements of papal primacy (usually with a sly remark that such-and-such a Pope achieved no concrete results with his pronouncements), he ignores them when interpreting Leo, concluding that "So forcefully articulated were Leo's claims for the Pope's universal and supreme authority over the Church, in fact, that his own pontificate constitutes a major turning point in the papacy." Duffy, meanwhile, discusses dispassionately earlier papal claims to primacy, quotes Leo helpfully, and situates his statements in the context of contemporary theological controversies, not least those that lead to the momentous definition of Christ's humanity and divinity promulgated in 451 at Chalcedon. Duffy says that "For Leo, the coming of Peter to the center of empire had been a providential act, designed so that from Rome the Gospel might be spread to all the world." In sum, Maxwell-Stuart gives the impression that he does not understand Leo's significance, McBrien treats Leo as a grasping innovator, and Duffy treats Leo as an articulate spokesman for a point of view long latent and now needful of vigorous explication in contentious times. Duffy has it right.

Gelasius I (492-496) provides another illuminating comparison of the merits of these books. In a famous letter to Emperor Anastasius, Gelasius said that there are two powers by which the world is chiefly governed: the "authority" of priests and the "power" of kings. He said that these powers are normally exercised in distinct spheres but that, because priests concern themselves with immortal souls while kings rule mortal bodies, the authority of priests is ultimately superior to the power of kings. Maxwell-Stuart relegates Gelasius' crucial letter to a marginal "box" in tiny print, thus providing little help in understanding what was at stake. McBrien—his treatment is too long and choppy to be quoted—makes a hash of what Gelasius actually said, confusing the Pope's own remarks with medieval interpretations of them. For McBrien, Gelasius' letter arose from the Pope's failure to be more sympathetic to Constantinople and resulted in Gelasius' being "consumed with the task of defending papal prerogatives against those who favored a less rigid Roman approach." (The "less-rigidists" are always McBrien's heroes.) Duffy quotes a large piece of Gelasius' letter. Right away, he lets the reader make up his own mind. Then he remarks that "This was not the sort of language that Anastasius was accustomed to hearing from the docile court-bishops of the East." Quite right. But for Gelasius a matter of principle was at stake, and that principle was not new. Perhaps the power and clarity of the formulation were new. Perhaps the precise concatenation of circumstances was new. But the issue was an old one and Gelasius' letter would not have shocked his predecessors.

One comparison drawn from the modern period will round out the picture. Maxwell-Stuart says of Pius X (1903-1914) that he entertained difficult relations with the Catholic states of Europe, condemned a group of thinkers called the "Modernists," and carried out important reforms in ecclesiastical administration. This is all true but completely baffling to any reader who does not already know a lot of church history and modern European history. McBrien sternly places Pius X among the "worst Popes" because of his "intemperate campaign" against theologians and biblical scholars, a campaign that was "cruel," and "internecine," and that burdened the Church disastrously until Vatican II. It is true that Pius opposed modernism and it is also true that, with the 20/20 hindsight that is history's glory and despair, we can see now that Pius was excessively concerned about some aspects of modern biblical scholarship and non-Thomistic theology. But McBrien's approach makes it difficult to understand the issues as Pius saw them. Surely in this post-modern world we are no longer required to stand in awe of all that is modern. And our judgments should be mature enough that we need not dismiss as pettifogging obscurantists all of those who were courageous enough to stand athwart the alleged path of "progress" and say "No." It might be added here that McBrien has no use for any of the nineteenth-century Popes, all of whom declined to jump on whichever fashionable bandwagons happened to be passing by the Vatican.

Once again, Duffy is better. He tells us that Pius was the son of a postman and a seamstress and that before his election he had spent his entire Church career as a parish priest and diocesan bishop. If he was out of step with the intellectual elites of his day, perhaps he was in step with the people in the pews. Pius was a reformer of Vatican institutions, a reviser of canon law, a formidable liturgist, and the "Pope of frequent communion." He detested the modern state and had serious doubts about many streams in modern thought. Duffy quotes him: "God has been driven out of public life by the separation of Church and state; He has been driven out of science now that doubt has been raised to a system. . . . He has even been driven out of the family which is no longer considered sacred in origins and is shorn of the grace of the sacraments." One might well agree with Duffy that Pius' staunch Ultramontanism was not necessarily the right remedy for these ills, but that is not to say the doctor didn't make a sound diagnosis.

So much for the current crop of books. Suffice it to say that some seed fell on good soil and some did not.

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What of the three themes I spelled out earlier? How might one follow them in an attempt to create both a history of the papacy and a sense of the rhythms of that history?

The papacy is an idea. From the time, in the second century, when the graves of Peter and Paul came to be especially venerated as holy places, the Roman See has been seen as having a special significance in the Christian world. By the third century, Rome's bishops were explicitly basing their authority on the "Petrine" text in Matthew. In the fourth century, in an administrative context that permitted the Church to function as a legal, public institution, and in a theological context where the most fundamental doctrines of the Trinity and of the divine and human natures of Christ were struggling to find acceptable and communicable definitions, the Popes began to perceive the potential of their Petrine office. Christ had assigned Peter some kind of leadership. The reigning bishop of Rome was Peter's successor. Therefore he was a leader. But what kind of leader? In what precise respects could he lead? It was Leo I in the fifth century who did more than any other Pope in history to articulate a working definition of papal primacy. His views owed much to a particular exegetical understanding of Matthew. But they were also rooted in the traditions of the Roman See, in the carefully conserved writings of earlier Popes. What is more, Leo was spurred on by classically Roman views of universalism grounded in and given visible expression by specific institutional structures. Finally, Leo was both guided and constrained by the terminological limitations of the Latin language.

Leo drew from deep wells of precedent, and his successors drew from him. Leo's Petrine thinking has never been altered much in basic outlines, but it has experienced modification. First, medieval Popes, beginning in the eleventh century and then definitively from the twelfth, referred to themselves not only as "Vicar of Peter" but also as "Vicar of Christ." From a theological point of view, this gradual shift can be attributed to a deepened understanding of Christ's words to Peter. From an historical point of view, the change can be seen as reflecting a natural reaction to a political environment in which kings and emperors regarded their own authority as God-given. As I often tell my students, medieval people would not have understood the modern notion that church and state can and ought to be separated. They wanted to know to whom God had assigned primary responsibility for Christendom. The modern secular state, deriving its ultimate authority in some way from "the people," does not demand a like clarification.

Second, as Christianity and the Petrine idea traveled from their Mediterranean homeland to the very different world of Germanic, Celtic, and Slavic Europe, they encountered, changed, and were in turn changed by people, cultures, and languages different from and sometimes even hostile to the original converts and communities. This dynamic process was repeated in the modern age as Catholicism expanded after its millennium of European focus to greet almost all the populations of the globe. Roman and Latin expressions of universalism and urban institutional structures proved, at least initially, to be ill-suited to defining and exercising leadership in all these diverse environments. The core of the Petrine idea has not changed but the language and conceptual frameworks that build bridges—a pontifex, that is, a pontiff, is a "bridge builder"—between the Petrine idea and the people for whom it became a living reality have altered significantly.

The understanding of papal primacy has also been modified over the centuries. While the hierarchical churches have never denied to Peter's successors a "primacy of honor," there have always been serious discussions of whether that kind of primacy translated into a "primacy of jurisdiction." Did Christ make Peter sovereign or chairman of the board, to put it aptly but inelegantly? In antiquity, there were Christian communities that fully subscribed to Roman primacy and other communities that did so only when it suited them, as when the Pope agreed with their theologians against the "heretics" of some other community. Byzantine theologians spoke of a "Pentarchy," meaning the joint leadership of the Church by the five ancient Patriarchs (Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, and Rome). Some writers in the time of Charlemagne saw the Pope as "first bishop" but not as primate. In the high Middle Ages, the newly constituted College of Cardinals sometimes viewed their consistories with the Pope in virtually parliamentary terms. In the late Middle Ages a "conciliarist" ecclesiology harkened back, or imagined it did so, to the "collegiality" of antiquity. Only a council, with the Pope in the chair, could truly exercise the Petrine office. Vatican I declared the Pope infallible and made him "universal ordinary" but the Council ended before defining precisely the relationship between the Pope and the bishops in the governance of the church. Vatican II did not resolve this issue, particularly not to the satisfaction of those who wish for a dramatic trimming of the theoretical and practical implications of the Petrine office. What is especially interesting here is the remarkable consistency both of papal views on the nature of the Petrine office and of episcopal, collegial, conciliarist challenges to that view. Read a few of the letters of Innocent I (401-417) and you would hardly be surprised by anything you would find in the letters of Pius IX (1846-1878). And a glance at the words of the acidulous Cyprian of Carthage (200?-258) would prepare you for the writings of, say, Richard McBrien.

It is immensely difficult for secular historians to grapple with the idea of the papacy as a theological

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proposition. It is easy enough for them to assemble the key texts and to weigh their words in particular historical or ideological contexts. Historians are good at that, and whether they are well or ill disposed towards the papacy, they have taught us much. But historians are not so good at dealing with the possibility that the papacy is part of the divinely willed order of things. Put a little differently, one can ask whether the "idea" of the papacy is to be treated in the same ways, and with the same analytical perspectives, as Marxism, or capitalism, or liberalism, or modernism, or any of the other big ideas that have been powerful forces in human history. Framed in such bald terms, it is easy to hide behind ambiguity, to answer "Yes and No." Compare the "idea" of the Trinity. It is easy enough to see this as a felicitous conjunction, in a certain place and time, of Greek syllogistic and analogical thinking, of Platonic vocabulary, of Latin precision, of catechetical necessities, and of disputational dynamics. Still, all of this being stipulated as true, there is something there that is independent of all the words that have been heaped on top of it. So too, the papal idea.

The papacy is an institution. No other area of papal history evinces so much change over time. Yet an assessment of that change must be yoked to an appreciation of why the changes took place, what ends they were meant to serve, and whether they were consistent with the fulfillment of the Petrine ministry.

For about three centuries, the Church was a persecuted and prosecuted institution and simply could not function openly and publicly. After the Constantinian "Peace of the Church," the institutions at the papacy's disposal began to grow, and they have never stopped growing. Between about 400 and 800 the Popes developed a set of administrative, charitable, and liturgical structures that served to manage extensive patrimonies in Italy (and for a long time in North Africa and southern France), to shelter the Roman populace that had been gradually abandoned by the imperial authorities, and to organize sacramental services in a large diocese. The Popes, especially and ironically the deeply ascetic Gregory I (590-604), were often talented administrators who regularly "spoiled the Egyptians": The papal chancery is modeled after the Roman imperial one, papal charitable services derived much from the urban practices of late antiquity, papal record-keeping owed a lot to city archives, and papal liturgical practices grew apace with those of other large episcopal towns.

After the Church had accomplished the Christianization of much of Europe, new problems presented themselves. If the papal idea centered on unity and leadership, how might that leadership be made effective in the new Christendom? The Popes had spent centuries organizing their own local church in an exemplary way while struggling all the while with ambitious local aristocrats, with warlords of every stripe, and with Frankish and German emperors who had succeeded the Roman and Byzantine rulers as papal nemeses. Beginning in the eleventh century and continuing for the next two centuries, the Popes fostered an unprecedented expansion and maturation of institutional structures. The Sacred College—fifty-three cardinals if the College was up to full strength, which it rarely was—took shape as a kind of "senate" for the Church. Canon Law was compiled, revised, and added to as never before, thanks to numerous high medieval Popes who were lawyers (few of them have been canonized, a fact that might prompt other reflections). Courts of law were refined to handle the avalanche of new business. Lateran Councils frequently gathered the clergy of Europe. Financial management was put on sound footings. Legates tied the Popes to people all over Europe in new and more continuous ways. The language of papal documents of the high Middle Ages is more juridical, even bureaucratic, than the more pastoral and prophetic language of earlier times, but this should be put in context. There was not so much a basic shift in the idea of the Petrine office as an explosion in papal competence and responsibility, requiring such precision and formalization.

Richard McBrien takes some delight in listing things that late antique and early medieval Popes did not do, his point seeming to be to delegitimize the things that later Popes actually did do. It is more useful to note that as papal opportunities and responsibilities grew, the Popes fashioned structures to make it possible for them to preserve unity and to exercise leadership. What is more, the growth of papal government in the years between 1050 and 1300 exactly parallels the development of increasingly sophisticated secular institutions in realms from Russia to Spain. I do not wish to enter here on a discussion of whether or not the development of strong central governments has been a good thing, but I cannot resist the temptation to remark on the irony implicit in modern liberals' profound faith in all governments except that of the Church.

The late Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Reformation were hard on the papacy in a variety of ways. In 1077 a German ruler, Henry IV, clad in penitent's garb, stood in the snow before Canossa castle begging absolution from Gregory VII. In 1303 Philip IV sent thugs to Anagni to terrorize the eighty-year-old Boniface VIII. The French king had attempted to tax his clergy and to haul a bishop before royal judges. Boniface opposed him resolutely but lost the battle.

The secular state was struggling to be born—a labor that took centuries. Europeans were still overwhelmingly Catholic, but they were caught in tan-

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gled webs of conflicting allegiances. In an attempt to settle accounts with France, the Popes temporarily removed to Avignon in 1305. They did not return to Rome until 1378. Then factions of cardinals hurled the Church into a schism that lasted until the Council of Constance put an end to it in 1417. People all over Europe were shocked, as well they might be. Catherine of Siena lamented the "Babylonian Captivity" of the papacy. Today's reader of Chaucer or Boccaccio cannot miss the anticlericalism of the age. Theologians at Paris formulated a conciliarist ideology that sought to vest more authority in councils and less in a monarchical papacy. This view of church government was ancient and novel at once. This was the time of Italian city councils, of the growth of parliament in England, of the Estates General in France, and of the Cortes in Spain. As monarchy was the fashion in the twelfth century, so representative ideas took flight in the fourteenth.

The scholasticism and courtly love of the high Middle Ages were receding before a call to return "ad fontes" (to the sources). For some, this meant a return to the Greek and Latin classics which taught views about things human and divine that accorded poorly with what ecclesiastical writers had been saying for centuries. For others, the sources were religious and, above all, the Scriptures. By denying authority to councils, treatises, and encyclicals, by appealing to "Scripture Alone," the Reformers sundered whatever was left of Christendom. What place was there for a papacy in such a world?

A shrinking one. The Council of Trent (1545-1563) affirmed many traditional teachings and achieved salutary institutional reforms, but it was lamented by some Catholics, ignored by most Protestants, and irrelevant to most rulers. The Popes of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are probably the least known in history. True, Urban VIII censured Galileo, but it is difficult to think of anything else "that every schoolboy should know" in that whole period. Joseph II, Holy Roman emperor from 1765 to 1790, issued more than six thousand religious edicts, closed four hundred monasteries, forbade the kissing of relics and the clothing of statues, demanded warrants for pilgrimages, and reorganized seminaries. Pope Pius VI was powerless to prevent these actions. The French Revolution and the Enlightenment fomented change on an unprecedented scale and the Popes responded with either stunned silence or calls to restore a world that had vanished. Pius IX (1846-1878) and his successors had to reinvent the papacy, not as an idea, but as an institution.

It has taken more than a century, right down to the time of Paul VI and John Paul II, for the papacy to figure out how to deal with the myriad states of the modern world. Pius IX distrusted republics, not least the Italian one from which he retreated into a self-imposed exile in the Vatican. Until the Lateran Treaty of 1929 the Popes had almost no influence upon, and also no real means of influencing, the states of either Europe or the wider world. Pius XI (1922-1939) reentered the world by signing a series of concordats with Europe's fascist powers. His aim, perhaps naive, was to restrain them and to create favorable conditions for the Church. By 1937 Pius pronounced Nazism "anti-Christian" but by then the Catholic center parties that might have provided viable opposition had all been crushed. Pius XII (1939-1958) was faced with the cataclysm of world war. In recent years critics, formed in a media-crazed age that is fond of gestures that are normally as splashy as they are empty, have bitterly chided both Popes for not taking bolder public stands, especially in the face of Hitler's atrocities. The reality is more complicated. Both Popes, especially the latter, worked tirelessly behind the scenes. Each knew that there was no hope of bringing Hitler to a modern Canossa, and that noisy pronouncements might well have worsened the plight of Europe's Jews, destroyed the Church's opportunities to save individuals and communities, and threatened the existence of the Catholic Church itself. Retrospective condemnation is easy. Making prudent decisions in 1940 was hard.

Stalin famously asked how many divisions the Pope has. Of course, he has none. But Paul VI and John Paul II realized that the Popes have moral right on their side. They could appear on television, travel, write, speak at the United Nations, visit and receive heads of state, and kick the props out from under Soviet Communism. And they could do all of this by mobilizing not soldiers but truth. The Popes have learned how to engage the modern world. Polls regularly show John Paul II to be the most admired man on earth. That's better than Canossa any day.

The Popes were relegated to govern a Catholic community that today numbers more than a billion souls scattered all over the planet. There are more Catholics in Latin America than anywhere else. Catholicism is growing faster in Asia and Africa than anywhere else. Modern Popes have sensitively addressed both of these phenomena.

The routine business of the Church has grown more centralized in some ways and more localized in other ways. Curial departments have been massively reorganized. People from all over the world have been brought to Rome to serve in important capacities. Communications, aided of course by technology, have become faster. Unity and leadership are exercised differently and more efficiently than in earlier times, but the basic aims of papal policy are consistent.

Modern Popes have been sensitive to the needs of Catholic communities on continents other than Europe and the Americas. Pius X may not have liked modern states but he promoted missionary work with genuine zeal. The sweet fruit of this labor is a

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Church today, and a cardinalate, that is more catholic than at any time in history. This too occasions interesting problems. The Catholic Church in the United States—there is no "American Church"—consists of around sixty million people, some of whom cause more noise and problems than the rest of the world's Catholics together. One important aspect of being Catholic means being in communion with all of those who are in communion with the Bishop of Rome. The ordination of women, ending clerical celibacy, popularly electing bishops, and many other issues that seem so urgent to some fraction of those one in twenty Roman Catholics who live in the U.S. are less urgent or even meaningless to the hundreds of millions of Catholics all over the world. The Popes have learned to be the heads of the world's most authentically international institution. They have done so, moreover, without the vaporous talk, the bureaucratic weirdness, and the fiscal profligacy of the world's other major international organization, the United Nations.

The Popes have in fact made peace with the modern world. It is easy to look back at Popes from Leo XII (1823-1829) to Pius XII and wish that they had had an opportunity to know exactly how a variety of political, social, and intellectual movements were going to turn out. Whether or not the ascendancy of liberal democracy actually marks the end of history, it is certainly true that in the nineteenth century the advent of democratic regimes signaled the end of kingdoms that had been around for an impressively long time. Popes were the leaders of a Church that democratic governments were legislating out of almost every realm of life from marriage to school. It is not surprising that a long series of Popes took a dim view of democracy. What is more, there is no reason why, even today, democracy itself should be lauded apart from a close scrutiny of its successes and failures. John Paul II has praised democracy as the most just form of government while also warning that the greatest benefit of liberty is the chance to do what is right. That is not a message that most in, say, modern America want to hear. Yet it is a more hopeful assessment of democracy, and also a more inspirational challenge to it, than Pius IX was able to muster.

It is probably impossible for us today to form even a vague sense of the impact of Darwin and Freud in their time. They shocked people. And not all of the people they shocked were rubes or simpletons. Suppose that we all have monkeys for ancestors. Then were monkeys created in the image and likeness of God, or have we all been sold a bill of goods? Suppose that our actions all result from unseen forces that have nothing to do with free will and that cannot be characterized by means of such notions as sin. Then do grace and redemption have any meaning?

It took a long time to think through these issues. That, of course, is one thing the Catholic Church does: It takes its time. The Church was finally able to teach confidently that purposeful creation and the basic concepts of modern biology could be brought into peaceful coexistence, if not into a state of complete identification. John Paul II has said that evolution deserves careful scrutiny. Moral theologians have come to agree that certain "objective disorders" may be rooted in mysterious recesses of the human psyche. Such agreement does not, of course, excuse the disorders. It helps to explain them and suggests paths for ministerial intervention. The Church cautiously took a few fine pieces from the vault of modern psychological and scientific thought, and paid full price for them. Progressives raided those vaults like crazed looters, regarded everything they hauled out as equally valuable, and paid for nothing.

The Church cautiously accommodated modern biblical studies and theology as well. It is important to remember that when the "Higher Criticism" appeared it was no less shocking to Protestant than to Catholic thinkers. Yet whereas biblical scholarship split Protestantism into factions, some of which turned the Bible into just one good book among many while others became "Fundamentalist," Catholic thinkers were encouraged by *Providentissimus Deus* (1893) and then by *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (1943) to apply to the text of Holy Writ all the tools of modern science. Today Catholics stand in the front ranks of biblical scholars. A century of papal encouragement is partly responsible for that.

Popes have encouraged scholarship in other ways. Leo XIII opened the Vatican archives in 1883 and to this day the Vatican library is a home-away-from-home for scholars in myriad disciplines from all over the world. Leo XIII also, in *Rerum Novarum* (1891), engaged the work of modern social scientists. The probing analyses of modern society by John Paul II are unthinkable apart from the intellectual framework of this encyclical. The very staying power of some papal documents is revealing about certain aspects of Catholic social thought. When Pius XII celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum* and when John Paul celebrated both its ninetieth and its hundredth anniversaries, the popular press was flummoxed. How, journalists wondered, could such "conservative" Popes say such "liberal" things and thereby contradict themselves? The reality, of course, is that these Popes were always and only Catholic in their fundamental analysis of society. But modern social sciences and the technical progress of modern societies forced Catholic thought to take account of specific realities that could not have occurred to St. Augustine or St. Francis.

Dogmatic theology is a trickier subject to handle in brief compass. Above all else the Pope is the guardian of the faith. Some progressives seem to assume that the distance between any two positions can always be halved. If you are an historical Pope and you act this

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way, Richard McBrien will say you are "understanding," or "reasonable," or "flexible." But if you stand on principle, McBrien will say you are "obstinate," or "inflexible," or "reactionary," or, worst of all, "conservative." Persons of honor have always known, however, that a person holding the truth cannot agree to split the difference with someone else, no matter if that person is holding a half-truth or a full error. Some of the eighty items listed on the "Syllabus of Errors" may make us smile today, but only some of them. The latitudinarianism condemned there might be equated with the rampant relativism of the present. Popes have been stalwart defenders of the proposition that all things are not equally true.

The neo-scholastic orthodoxy of the nineteenth century turns out to have been less satisfactory than Popes from Leo XIII to Pius XII might have thought. It is interesting, in retrospect, that the same Pope, Pius XII, who issued *Divino Afflante Spiritu* could also have issued *Humani Generis* (1950) with its condemnations of the "New Theologians" and their more scriptural approach to theology and ministry. A close reading of the latter encyclical shows that Pius' great concern was relativism more than the substantive positions of the theologians. Then Vatican II rehabilitated the New Theology and three of the New Theologians got red hats: Jean Danielou from Paul VI and Henri de Lubac and Yves Congar from John Paul II. On one occasion Gregory I was criticized for changing his mind about something and he wrote back to say, "What is reprehensible is not to change one's stand, but to entertain fickle opinions. Now if the mind remains unwavering in seeking to know what is right, why should you object when it abandons its ignorance and reformulates its position?" Always seeking to know what is right, the Popes have reformulated their positions many times in the past century.

The papacy is an idea and an institution, but above all, the papacy is about particular individuals. It would be pointless to attempt to say something here about each of the 264 Popes or to make generalizations that would somehow apply to many of them. Two cautions may be entered, however. First, Duffy entitles his book *Saints and Sinners*. That applies to all of us. But as it applies particularly to the Popes it reminds us that, no matter how detestable, a bad Pope cannot ruin the papacy and, however admirable, a great Pope cannot save it. The papacy is, as I have been insisting, an idea and an institution immeasurably larger than any individual Pope. Thus, focusing on the saintliness of John XXIII or on the sinfulness of Alexander VI is really beside the point. Second, pontificates are complex organisms. Perhaps the Pope is the nucleus, but to understand the organism you need to know something about the cardinals, about the key personal advisers, about the person who drafts the encyclicals (more of an issue in modern than in earlier times), about the issues that arose and about how and when they arose. Some Popes we know to have been powerful personalities, some we know to have been weaker. In many cases, we have too little evidence to say for sure. Paradoxically, studying just the Popes can distort the history of the papacy.

McBrien has his best and worst Popes. I have been reading, writing, and teaching papal history for more than twenty-five years and I do not know how to do that. I do know that historians in recent years have learned to differentiate carefully between what actually happened and how events are remembered. For those unaccustomed to the language of the academy, this is to distinguish between history and "memory." McBrien's assessment of John XXIII shows that he either does not know or deliberately neglected this useful distinction. He makes John the best Pope in history. The fact is that John was old and relatively inactive. He famously called a council but he did not live to shape its activity. It is only in retrospect that John's "memory" has grown to Everestian proportions.

How do you get to be great? For McBrien you have to be "progressive." For Duffy you have to be historically significant—although Duffy is too serious to pronounce Popes "great" or "bad." On that account, I would rank Leo I, Gregory I (McBrien puts him down as his other "Best" Pope), Nicholas I, Innocent III, Gregory IX, Nicholas V, Pius IX, and Leo XIII as great Popes. If a long list of achievements, a marked impact on your time, an obvious personal holiness, and the respect (I do not say "agreement") of your contemporaries are marks of greatness, then it is very hard to think of a greater Pope than the present one.

Papal history is replete with stories that are funny, disturbing, inspiring, illuminating. The fascination of those stories and of the Popes who made them is perpetual. Of that whole story, Richard McBrien says, in concluding his book, "Few, if any, traditions associated with the papacy have anything to do with the Apostle Peter, or with the Lord himself, for that matter. If nothing else is clear from this lengthy review of more than 260 Popes, at least that should be clear." Well then, why did he bother to write his book? Here is how Eamon Duffy begins: "For all its sins, and despite its recurring commitment to the repression of 'error,' the papacy does seem to me to have been on balance a force for human freedom, and largeness of spirit." The spirit of the successful historian needs to be almost as large as his subject. FT

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Books In Review

Catholic and Evangelical?

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY: Volume 3. By WOLFHART PANNENBERG. Translated by Geoffrey Bromiley. *Eerdmans. 713 pp. $49.*

Reviewed by **Robert W. Jenson**

AUTHORS OFTEN await reviews with considerable anxiety, knowing that their work's impact and survival much depend on them. We may not picture Wolfhart Pannenberg so awaiting this piece. That he will have a place in future histories of modern theology is long since assured, by the extent of his scholarship, the energy of his speculation, and by his work's relation to modernity's canonical figures. Moreover, the exact nature of that place will be determined by historical factors very little to be deflected by reviewers. In my review of Volume 2 for this journal (May 1995), I suggested that his place in history depends on the fate of modernity. If postmodernity really turns out to be something new, Pannenberg may not much figure in its theology; if it turns out to be simply the negative phase of modernity, he will be essential.

Volume 3 covers church and eschatology. The part on the Church is long, and the part on eschatology is—by Pannenbergian standards—short. This may surprise those acquainted with his thinking, since in its formative period it was little concerned with the Church, and since the concept of history's completion has always been his great key to theological understanding. But just this last point explains one side of the phenomenon: his theology is throughout so very eschatological that most of what might have been expected under that label has already been discussed. What remains are certain particular problems, often more formal than material.

As for the formidable mass of his treatment of the Church, it can only be said that once Pannenberg turns his attention to something, he goes all out. The turn of attention itself has a double explanation. In a speech a few years ago, Pannenberg movingly described it as a growth of his own faith. And he has been much caught up in the great ecclesiological events of recent decades.

As Pannenberg notes, ecclesiology has become a major theological enterprise only in this century, most decisively in the ecumenism that began after World War II. For most of the Church's history, the Church was understood as a presupposition of theology rather than as a problem for it; and until Vatican II no great council had thought to promulgate doctrine about the Church herself. It was as the division of the Church came to be seen in a new light that the Church became a theological problem; once those on the other side of a schism come to be regarded as also church, so that reconciliation with them must be explored, the questions of what the Church is and how she may be identified become urgent. When the fact of the ecumenical dialogues made ecclesiology urgent, ecclesiology understandably became their dominating concern.

OF RECENT prominent German Protestant systematic theologians, Pannenberg is the only one to have been himself much involved in the ecumenical movement—recent debates with Gerhard Ebeling or Eberhard Jüngel have been debates between a major participant and intermittent armchair observers. It is not accidental to the structure or positions of the present volume that Pannenberg was co-chair of the study commissioned by the German Catholic and Evangelical bishops which produced the volume *Lehrerurteilungen—kirchentrennend?* (*The Condemnations of the Reformation Era—Do They Still Divide?*) This report demonstrated point by point that the Catholic-Reformation condemnations of the sixteenth century should no longer be considered church-divisive. (In my view, these results stand even though they have now been sharply criticized by the Roman curia.)

The present volume's ecclesiology may then be described as an effort to develop, within the speculative trinitarianism elaborated in earlier volumes, an ecumenical—and so, among other determinants, catholic—understanding of the Church, *without* abandoning the German Protestant church-concept. (German theologians like to talk about various confessional *Kirchenbegriffe*, or "church-concepts." Others of us may doubt that "*the* Catholic church-concept" or "*the* Protestant church-concept" actually exists, but that a *German* Protestant *Kirchenbegriff* exists is—perhaps all too—plain.)

The catholic aspect of Pannenberg's ecclesiology appears first in its organization. His treatment of the Spirit's saving work in individuals, of faith, hope, and love, is not, as often in Protestant exposition, a topic of its own, but is instead one section within the chief long chapter of explicit ecclesiology, on a level with and coordinated to sections on the communion of believers, sacraments, churchly office, and the relation of the Church to the total "people of God." Pannenberg is catholic too in his ecumenically comprehensive discussions of sacraments and churchly office, which for the most part would surely be acceptable to the Catholic Church.

The continuity of Pannenberg's ecclesiology with his general system appears in that this chapter is bracketed by chapters on the Spirit and on "Election and History." The former is a speculative development of the connection between creation and the Church, in the "ecstatic" inner-trinitarian reality of

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the Spirit. The function of the latter chapter is tipped by the title of its final subsection, "The God of Election and God's Governance of the World *in the Process of History*" (emphasis added).

PANNENBERG'S loyalty to a Protestant understanding of the Church is then explicit throughout, and we must spend our remaining space on this. In the very first paragraph of the foreword, after noting the catholic outline mentioned, he writes, "Nevertheless, the focus of the discussion is on individual participation in salvation, with the church and sacraments simply as signs of its future consummation" (perhaps more clearly translated ". . . *since* [emphasis added] church and sacraments are merely signs of future consummation").

That the Church and its constitutive institutions are "signs" of the salvation to which individuals will attain is Pannenberg's chief ecclesiological axiom. The language is, of course, not his innovation; as he notes, Vatican II described the Church as sacramental "sign and instrument," and he adheres to the catholic principle that sacramental signs contain what they signify. Nevertheless, what all that means depends on what is signified. For Vatican II, it is the final unity of humankind that is signified; for Pannenberg it is individual entry into that unity. The difference is not as subtle as a first reading may suggest.

This ordering of church-community and individual believer pervades the volume: "It was typical of Jesus' proclamation of the imminent coming of God's reign that he addressed it directly to individuals, and did not . . . attempt to achieve a gathered eschatological remnant community. . . . To this . . . corresponds in the . . . life of the Christian church the immediacy of individual believers to Jesus Christ, notwithstanding . . . that their faith is mediated by the church's proclamation and its administration of the sacraments." For though the Church's tradition and teaching make faith possible, "the act of faith" itself "individualizes . . . focusing totally on the personal relation to Jesus Christ." Therefore the Church's mediation of the gospel by tradition and teaching reaches its goal "only when by it recipients achieve their own independent relation to the matter, and hence a relation of immediacy" which allows them to "forget the communication process." All in all, It would be hard to formulate a more direct contrary to, for instance, Cardinal Ratzinger's definition of "the Christian soul" as "the *anima ecclesiastica*, that is, a personal self through whom the integral community of the Church expresses itself."

Perhaps the chief decision is made in the section "The Fellowship of Individuals with Jesus Christ and the Church as the Fellowship of Believers." The question of the section is about the union between the two fellowships of the title. Pannenberg begins with a basic move of ecumenical communion-ecclesiology: believers' "fellowship with the one Lord by Word and sacrament" unites them "into the church's fellowship"; because in the Eucharist they are one body with one Lord, they are one body with one another.

SO FAR, all ecumenical hands will say, so good. But some may start to worry when discussion of the point is summarized: "Individual believers are united to the church by their common relation to Jesus Christ." Is it indeed sufficient to think of the Church as a society united by individuals' shared interest, even if that interest is their individual unions with Christ?

The worry may deepen as Pannenberg emphasizes repeatedly the one-way causation between fellowship with the Lord and fellowship with each other. Or when he insists that although "Jesus Christ meets believers in the church," the concern of that meeting in word and sacrament is properly (*eigentlich*) "individual fellowship with Jesus Christ." For of course it would be possible to see the matter just the other way around, and say that although it is individuals who hear the gospel and receive the sacraments, the concern of their hearing and reception is precisely the creation of a holy community. And to note that the fellowship of loaf and cup is in itself already a human communion, which then mediates fellowship with the Lord.

Indeed, according to the passages from 1 Corinthians on which all such discussions depend, perhaps one should order the matter neither way. For in those passages the reality received by individuals in the Eucharist and the community which the rite creates are the very *same* "body of Christ." In the loaf and cup we receive *at once* Christ and one another; in the language of Augustine, we receive "the whole Christ" (*totus Christus*), the Head *with* the body. Perhaps there are no such things as an "individual fellowship with Jesus Christ" and a fellowship of the Church to be contrasted with each other.

Here readers will probably pay their money and take their choice. Some will find in Pannenberg's ecclesiology the sharpest and most widely informed clarification of their attitude to the Church. Others will find in it the best possible presentation of a Protestantism which almost but not quite transcends its difference from Catholicism.

The Secularized Christian Academy

THE DYING OF THE LIGHT: THE DISENGAGEMENT OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES FROM THEIR CHRISTIAN CHURCHES. BY JAMES TUNSTEAD BURTCHAELL. *Eerdmans. 888 pp. $45 cloth, $30 paper.*

Reviewed by **John Peter Kenney**

WHEN I ENTERED Bowdoin in the autumn of 1970, I came as a Catholic student to what I thought

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was a Congregationalist college. I recall sitting at my first Convocation that fall, in the splendid First Parish Church of Brunswick, and listening, with a mixture of curiosity and ecumenism, to President Roger Howell speaking from the pulpit. To my surprise, only trace elements of the Protestant religion could be detected that day. Coming from Massachusetts, where denominational apartheid then held sway, I had hoped to observe and perhaps even to imbibe some of the spirit of Protestantism. But the tepid and at best vestigial religiosity of that Convocation was by then the norm at Bowdoin. Chapel services had been eliminated as a requirement in the late sixties and were largely defunct as a voluntary endeavor by the early seventies. The old and noble Congregational tradition, with its once great zeal for salvific holiness and for social causes like abolitionism, had quietly disappeared. My old Classics professor, Nathan Dane II, a scion of the old Bowdoin, prophesied in those days that the college chapel would become in my lifetime a museum. He was only partially wrong; I understand that it now serves as a concert hall, available for occasional religious services.

Bowdoin's transition from a denominational to a secular college was repeated at hundreds of academic institutions throughout the United States in this century. This puzzling and perhaps alarming phenomenon is the topic of James Burtchaell's inquiry. In order to approach this immense topic, he has written a very large book, rich in detail, sometimes diffuse in its argument, but finally compelling in its force and insight. He brings to this topic considerable authorial presence, derived from his academic training at Notre Dame and Cambridge, his experience as Provost at Notre Dame, and his theological formation as a Roman Catholic priest. As his title suggests, Burtchaell's attitude is elegiac, tempered by a withering sense of irony. Although he offers no solutions to those who rage against this dying of religious light in the academy, he does present a clear-eyed account of the forces, process, and rhetoric of its extinction.

BURTCHAELL narrates seventeen case studies drawn from seven distinct denominations. These include: Congregationalist (Dart-

JOHN PETER KENNEY *is Dean of the College at Saint Michael's College in Vermont, a Roman Catholic liberal arts college founded by the Society of Saint Edmund.*

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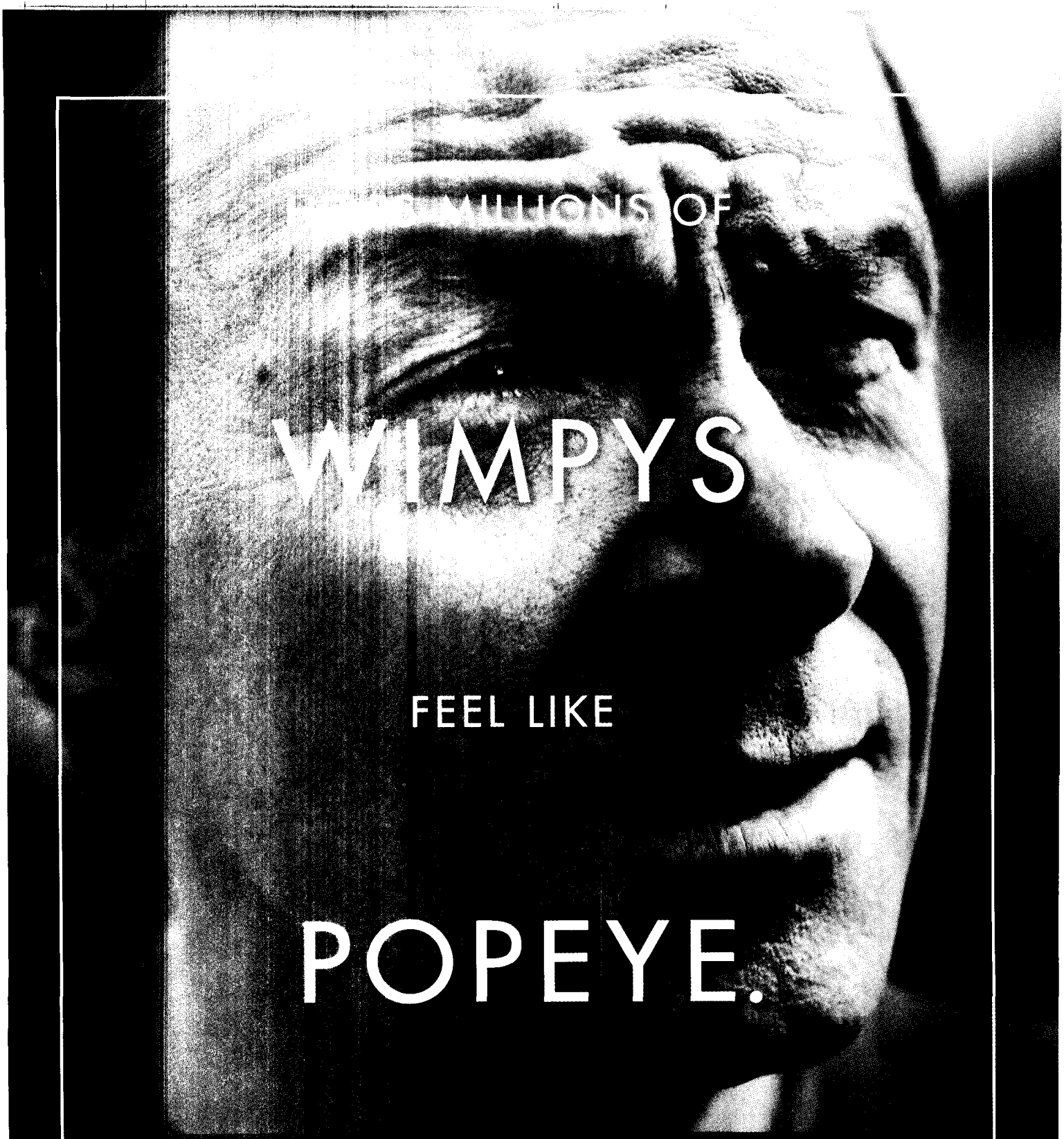

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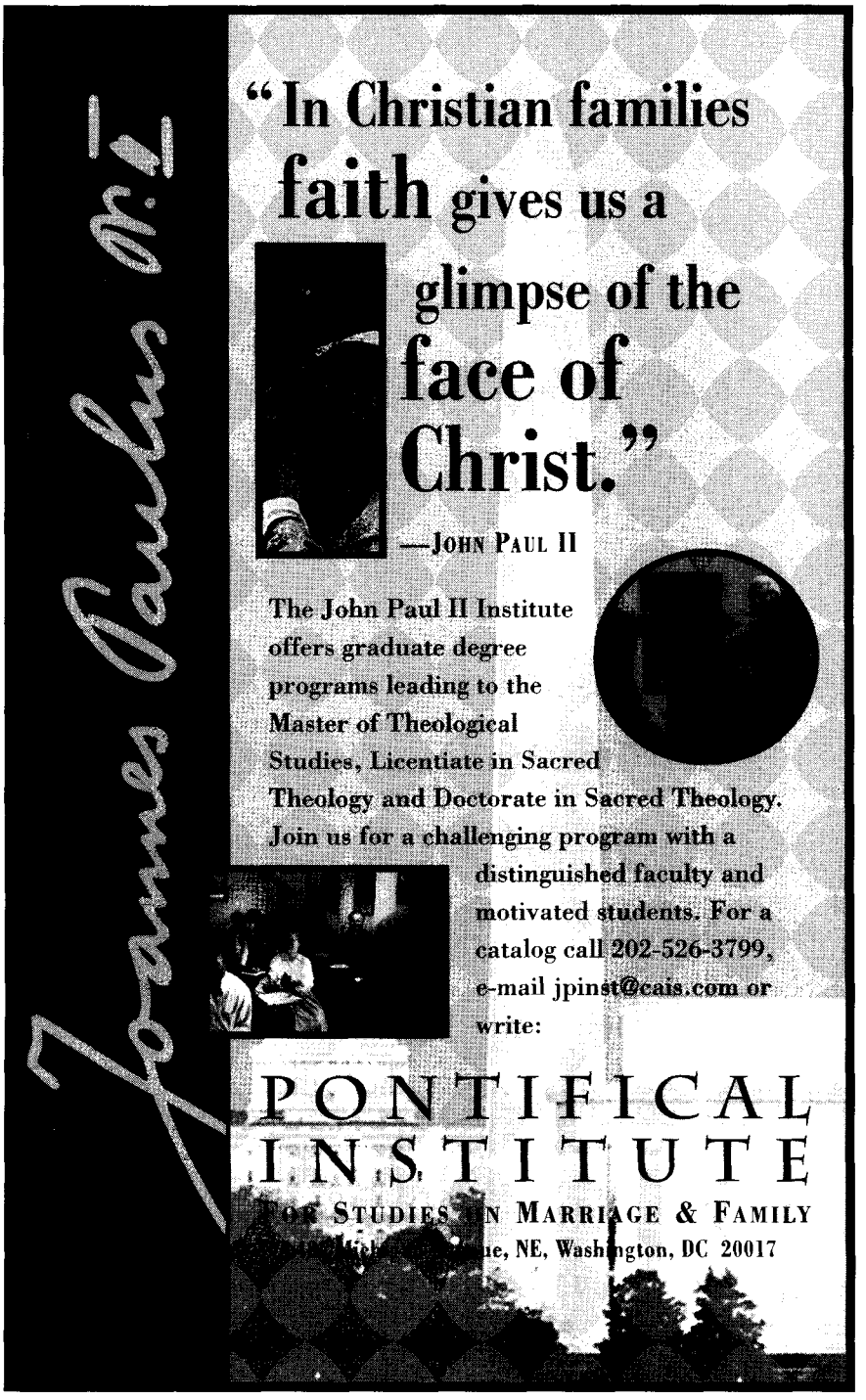
mouth, Beloit); Presbyterian (Lafayette, Davidson); Methodist (Millsaps, Ohio Wesleyan); Baptist (Wake Forest, Virginia Union, Linfield); Lutheran (Gettysburg, St. Olaf, Concordia-River Forest); Catholic (Boston College, New Rochelle, St. Mary's of California); and Evangelical (Azusa Pacific, Dordt).

Each study is based primarily on presidential terms of office, so that the book offers interwoven stories of individual figures and institutional histories. These form a brocaded pattern across the denominations, with striking symmetries emerging—often unexpectedly—at different times and at ecclesiastically distant campuses. The author wisely recommends sampling these narratives, based on one's denominational affinity, and then reading others for comparison. A final chapter reviews "The Story within the Stories"; the complete package thus serves as a supplement to George Marsden's work on the secularization of Protestant universities (*The Soul of the American University*) or Philip Gleason's study of the Catholic academy in the last century (*Contending with Modernity*).

Burtchaell discovers subtle denominational variations on one theme: the gradual but effective separation between church and academy. As a result of that process, the academy has become a culture increasingly alien to religious life, and it is no longer a vested contributor in the life of the church. At the same time, religion has come to play a much diminished role in the education of college students, even at those schools retaining some religious association. All this has helped to reinforce two key modern dogmas: that religion is, if not wholly irrational, at least nonrational, and certainly outside the bounds of intellectual articulation; and that religion is but marginally significant in human life. While none of the denominations represented in this book would formally endorse these attitudes, Burtchaell shows how their colleges have come tacitly to accept them, and how, in consequence, those colleges have lost their ability to challenge secular culture.

Several common factors led to this institutional loss of religious identity:

> The elements of slow but apparently irrevocable cleavage of colleges from churches were many. The church was replaced as a financial patron by alumni, foundations, philanthropists, and the government. The regional accrediting associations, the alumni, and the government replaced the church as the primary authorities to whom the college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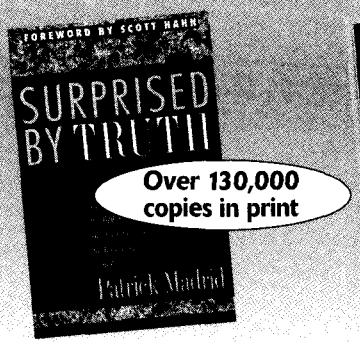

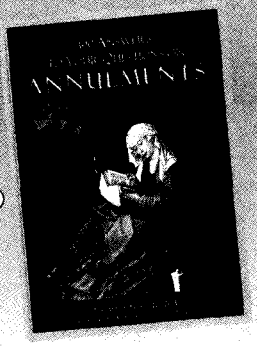

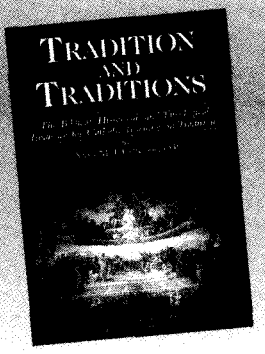

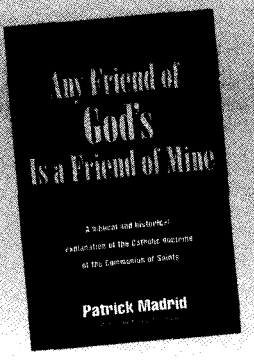

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would give an accounting of its stewardship. The study of their faith became academically marginalized, and the understanding of religion was degraded by translation into reductionist banalities for promotional use. Presidential hubris found fulfillment in cultivating the colleges to follow the academic pacesetters, which were selective state and independent universities. The faculty transferred their primary loyalties from their college to their disciplines and their guild, and were thereby antagonistic to any competing norms of professional excellence related to the church.

BUT ALL THESE public changes are ultimately grounded in a failure of belief and of nerve, in which the members of these religious communities lost the will to express their theologies in the academy. In each case, academics—even if they were religious—came to believe that faith did not yield knowledge apposite to the disciplines or relevant to public life. As Burtchaell points out, few of these institutions originally cultivated a vigorous, intellectual theological culture. Most—the Jesuits a notable exception—combined a classical education with haphazard Christian catechesis. They soon found their theological resources no match for the intellectually corrosive and religiously scornful demeanor of modernity. Many academic leaders came to accept that faith was a private matter, so that the church as such should have little standing in the academy.

"Bible penknifers, miracle rejectors, God minifiers, man magnifiers, hell expungers, and those with animal ancestors"—all these were anathematized by President Eli Reece of Azusa Pacific University in 1919, back when a denominational college still retained its religious salience. We do not see his like today. Amidst all the detail of the book the cultural tectonics of this shift appear, allowing us to glimpse a recurrent pattern of collegiate history that might be called Burtchaell's law. Denominational institutions gradually changed from an initial period of theological specificity and commitment, through a period of "pietism," followed by indifferentism, to a final stage of rationalism and secularism. For Burtchaell "pietism" is the key phrase. "Pietism" signifies not so much the zeal of the religious reformer, but the program of those who simplified, mutated, and finally replaced the tradition with a liberal Christianity which viewed theological articulation as a sectarian narrowing

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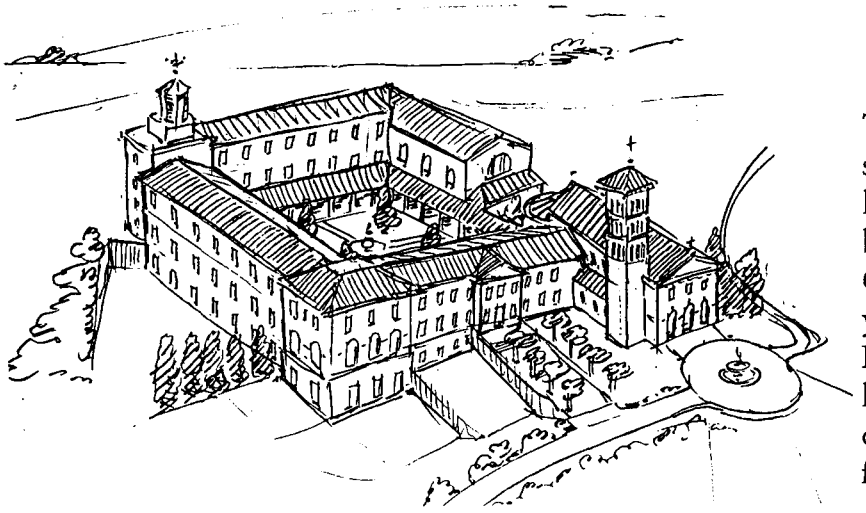

This fall, ground will be broken on the site of a new Catholic seminary in the heart of the American Midwest. It will be the new home of Our Lady of Guadalupe Seminary, founded just five years ago by the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter. Already, increasing enrollment has forced the seminary to move from its original location to a larger, temporary facility.

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The construction of a new seminary, and the growing number of vocations, are signs of great hope not only for the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter, but for the Universal Church. For this remarkable project to be completed, though, your help is needed. The cost of building and furnishing the seminary will be more than nine million dollars--a challenge for any religious community, especially one as new as the Fraternity! We can only meet this challenge with the help of Catholics like you who want to ensure that there will be priests for the new millennium.

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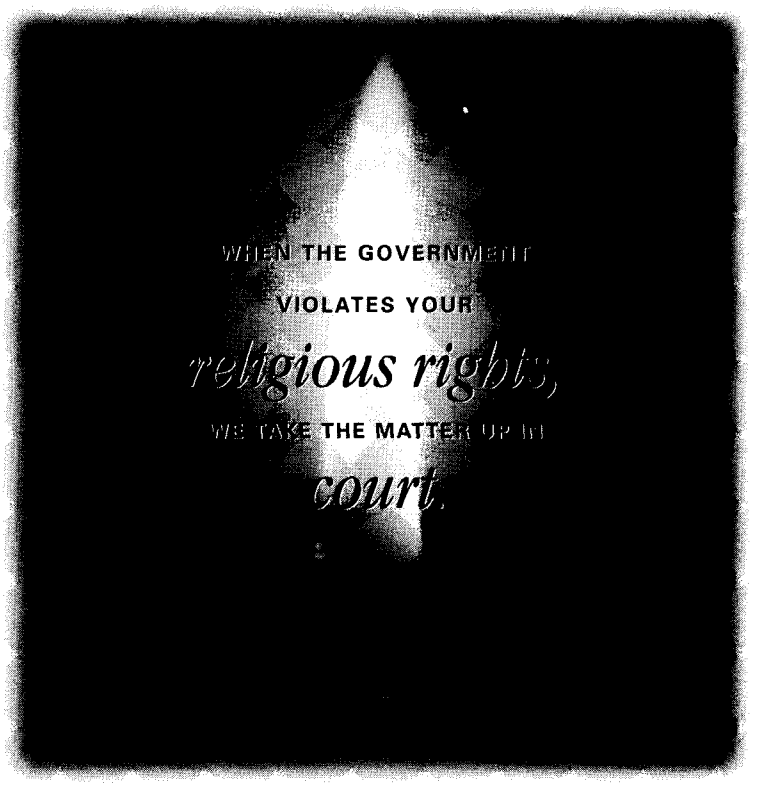
that stands in the way of a truly personal Christianity. The bother of theological clarity and definition was supplanted by the comforting vacuity of a more "inclusive" but "solo" faith. On Burtchaell's account, this led to indifference regarding theological matters and finally to a secular rationalism that is hostile to religion itself. The great paradox of this story is that academic pietists revised their religious traditions in the apparent hope of making them more durable, but only hastened their final collapse.

Burtchaell wryly suggests that the production of "covenants" and "vision statements" is a leading indicator of a college's estrangement from its founding religious community. Yet it bears remembering that Burtchaell's analysis tracks the academic symptoms of the much larger cultural malaise of modernity. We now find ourselves amidst a widespread critique of modernism within the academy itself, with determined opponents—both religious and nonreligious—coming to the fore. There are those who believe that a post-secular period has commenced, and that, at the very least, our intellectual culture may become more hospitable to religious traditions. The "cultural place" of religion could well be shifting from the margins to which modernists had assigned it to a more central one. This holds some promise for the religious academy. It suggests that those institutions that have maintained some measure of their religious identity may now be positioned to accelerate this renewed appreciation of religion's importance. Rather than offering vague commitments to unspecified forms of "diversity" within themselves, these colleges can contribute to a reemergence of a theologically articulate diversity among institutions simply by being themselves.

It is too much to expect that another freshman will one day sit in the nave of the First Parish and hear the President of Bowdoin call the assembled members of a Congregational college to their predestined tasks of Christian sanctity and social justice. This is beyond the promise of the new millennium. But at some colleges a religiously grounded invitation to moral renewal and social action is well within the bounds of possibility. Such institutional rhetoric will have effect only if those colleges have resolved to permeate the academy with the core credenda of the Christian faith. James Burtchaell's substantial volume can serve a premonitory role to those intent on that task, warning of the prevailing dangers and reminding of the cost of failure.



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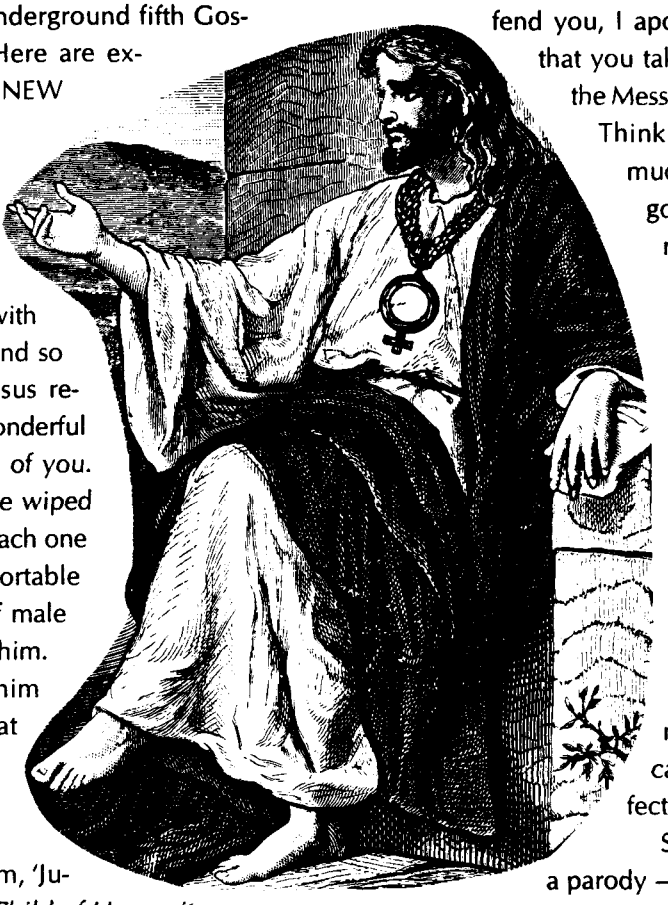
The Politically-Correct Jesus

If you're annoyed with the state of the churches, maybe it's because you're just *out of it*. Many clergy don't really go by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John anymore. They go by an underground fifth Gospel you're not aware of. Here are excerpts, first revealed in the NEW OXFORD REVIEW:



"Toward the end of his ministry, Jesus said to his disciples, 'You will fall away because of me.' Peter declared, 'Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you.' And so said all of the disciples. Jesus remarked to them, 'What a wonderful support system I have in all of you. Truly, I am touched.' And he wiped away a little tear, and gave each one a tender hug, feeling comfortable with the delicate balance of male and female energies within him.

"Later, Judas came to him in the Garden, and a great crowd with swords and clubs. And Judas said, 'Hail, Master!' And he kissed Jesus. Jesus said to him, 'Judas, would you betray the Child of Humanity with a kiss? Of course it's perfectly understandable, and I want to assure you this day that you are not to blame for this weakness. Rather, I blame your patriarchal family and this brutal, materialistic society for pushing you into this desperate state.'

"Then they seized Jesus and brought him to the high priest, who said to him, 'I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah.' Jesus answered, 'I know what I said in the past might seem shocking. So I wish to offer a proverbial olive branch and be sensitive to your feelings. If I've said anything to offend you, I apologize. I'd like to suggest that you take what I said about being the Messiah in a more nuanced way. Think of me, therefore, not so much as a god but as another good person, merely adding my voice to the rainbow of voices.'

"And they unbound Jesus and sent him on his way, admonishing him to be more careful about what he said in public in the future. And so he did, and he lived happily ever after."

Well, what a sweet fellow! A gender-neutral, nonjudgmental, ecumenically-sensitive Jesus — perfect for our times!

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The Necessity of Community

ALL THE ESSENTIAL HALF-TRUTHS ABOUT HIGHER EDUCATION. By GEORGE DENNIS O'BRIEN. *University of Chicago Press. 243 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by
James Tunstead Burtchaell

DENNIS O'BRIEN is well entitled to publish a presidential memoir. The great college presidents used to do it: Willam Jewett Tucker of Dartmouth, Charles Eliot of Harvard, David Starr Jordan of Stanford, Robert Hutchins of Chicago. O'Brien, a Chicago-trained philosopher now recently retired, first learned administration at Princeton, and later served both Bucknell and Rochester as president. He is considerably less famous than these great men, but in this reviewer's opinion, a greater than they may be he.

JAMES TUNSTEAD BURTCHAELL, C.S.C., *is the author of* The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from Their Christian Churches (*Eerdmans*).

The "half-true" clichés he gnaws on include such as "The faculty is the university," "Tenure is a necessary condition of academic freedom," "The liberal arts curriculum aims at distribution" (or, "at diversity"), "Low-cost education benefits the least advantaged," and other old bones.

Consider his commentary on low-cost education for the disadvantaged. The commonplace belief is that middle- and upper-class students are enrolled in the high-ticket independent schools, while the more affordable state institutions provide for those of more modest means. Wrong. In general, O'Brien finds that while the actual cost of educating a student on either campus is about equal, the highly subsidized public campuses attract the well-to-do and the private campuses are educating many of the poor. Family income on state campuses is typically higher at State U. than at Old Siwash. In New York, for example, despite affirmative action the SUNY campuses have chosen the students with better secondary school records, and this produces student bodies that are predominantly white, wealthy, and suburban. To a large extent, the private colleges in New York have been a haven for those pushed out of SUNY by the odd economics of the system (though CUNY has historically followed another path). At the World Bank, O'Brien learned that this inversion repeated itself internationally: low-price (but high-cost) state education is largely utilized by the local urban elites, not

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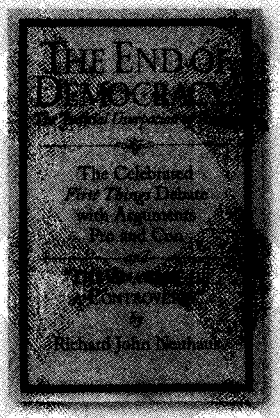

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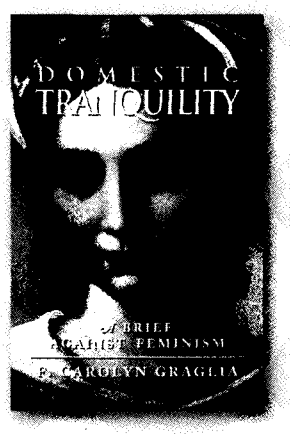

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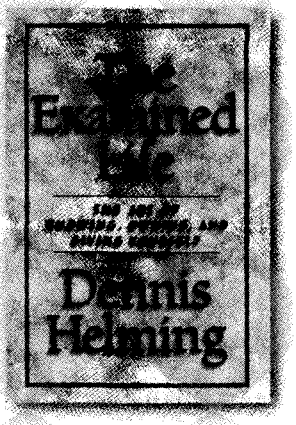

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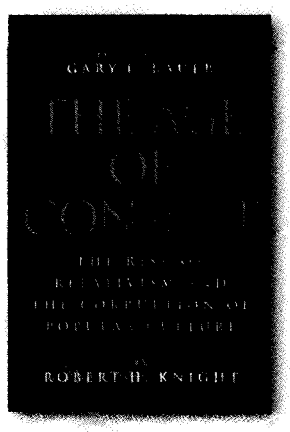

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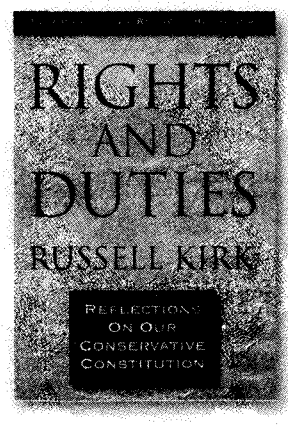

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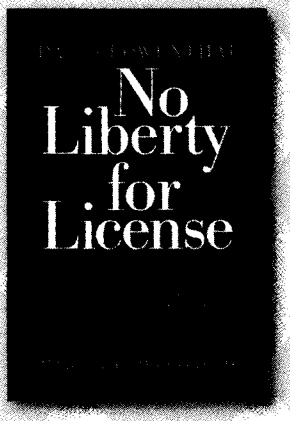

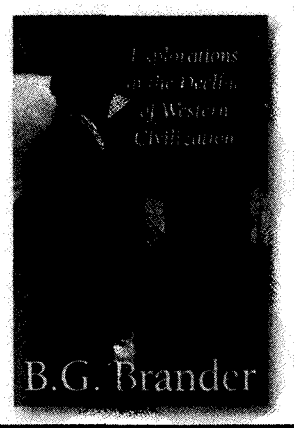

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by the disadvantaged (usually rural) poor. In Puerto Rico, for instance, the wealthier gentry attend the University of Puerto Rico while Catholic colleges serve the lower-income sector.

O'Brien is similarly restive in his commentary on what passes for a "liberal arts" curriculum, on tenure as the ultimate sinecure, and on the unstable relations between faculty and administrators. Most of this mildly muckraking memoir is well illustrated from his experience, and pluckily argued.

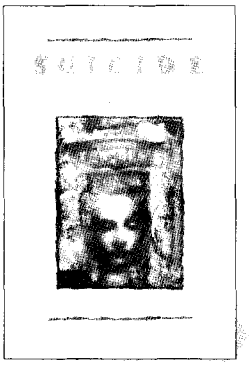
BUT THAT IS NOT the heart of this book. Alongside his reportorial critique, the standard stuff of presidential memoirs, O'Brien deploys a deeper and more resourceful argument: not against another half-truth, but against a grand deception.

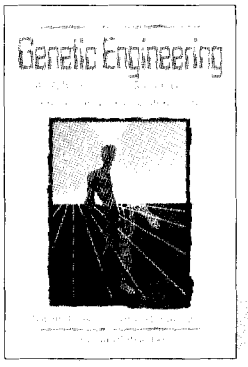
As his bolder purpose began to emerge, I was reminded of G. K. Chesterton's hastily written and unresearched *St. Thomas Aquinas*, which brought medievalist Etienne Gilson to exclaim with appreciative envy: "I have been studying St. Thomas all my life, and I could never have written such a book." O'Brien's appraisal of the modern university, so modest in size, is as fascinating an exposé as Chesterton's Aquinas. And just as Chesterton's final three chapters offer the most compact and powerful insight into Thomism that I have ever studied, so O'Brien's ninth and tenth chapters are a clear and convincing diagnosis of how contemporary higher learning has been hamstrung.

O'Brien begins by describing the predecessor institution in the nineteenth century, which he calls "the denominational college." Staffed largely by clergy and beholden to the dogmatic imperatives of the sponsoring church, this modest institution had an uncritical self-confidence in its hold on the truth, and asked of its students only that they be able to recite it back to their teachers. The mentors at these denominational colleges thought of themselves as acting in loco parentis, and believed that the transmittal of sound moral insight to their students was congruent with their intellectual task, and ultimately more important. Indeed, character was more important than intellect, and its reliable guardian.

All that is gone now, says O'Brien: not just from the several score of billionaire universities, but from virtually all our more than three thousand postsecondary institutions that have adopted the ethos of the twentieth century "research university." The consensus now is that the natural sciences offer us the ideal form of learning:

In matters of life and death, the ethical line is getting harder to find.





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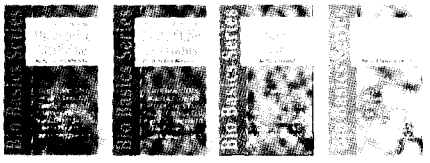

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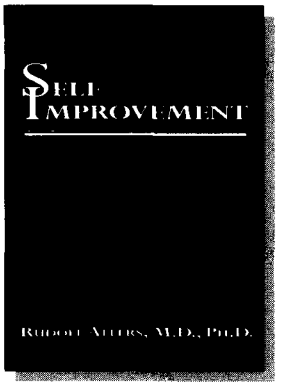

Uncovering the truth

Most people don't learn their personality flaws until someone loses his temper and reveals them, Dr. Allers counselled. (He also explained why people often don't know their *best* traits.) Among his findings:

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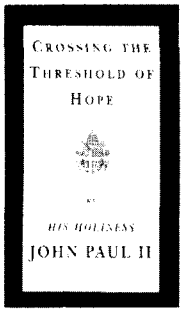

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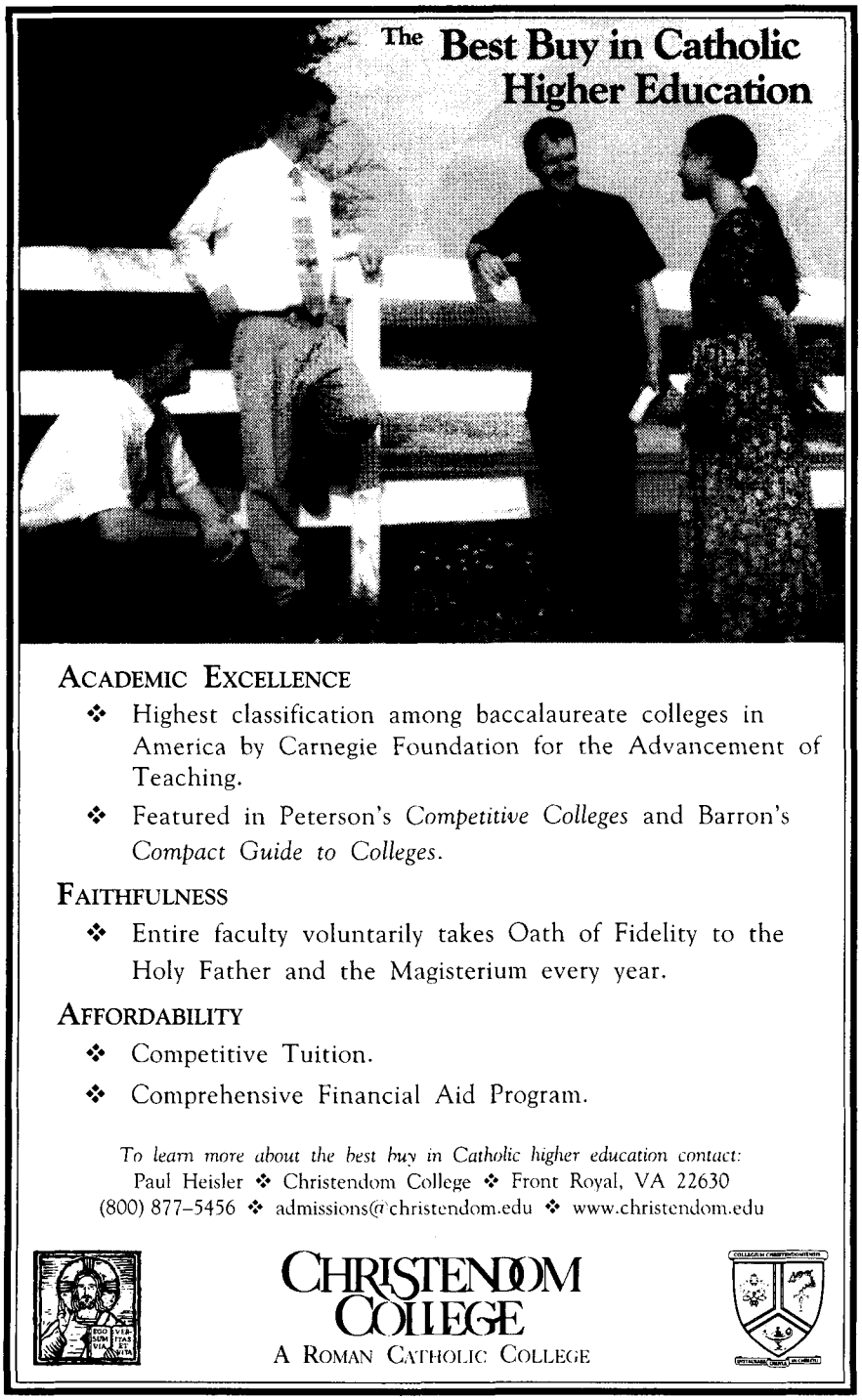
empirically verified and objectively reliable. (O'Brien deals carefully with the newer multiculturalists who, of course, are not at home in the consensus.) This conviction has created a radically new paradigm of higher education. Intellectual goals displace moral aims. Truth is no longer to be recovered from an old heritage; it is a new goal to be discovered. Interrogation replaces recitation. The old colleges had all the answers; the new universities have nothing but questions.

WITH SO MUCH modern development depending upon technology, information, and sophisticated skills, academics are inclined to think of the university as the strategic institution of modern society. O'Brien disagrees: "To be foundational for society, an institution should have the inherent capability to assess, sort, prioritize, and commend the Good." The contemporary university has no competence or even ambition in this field of knowledge, and has only primitive and emotional dealings with the Good. As the basis for modern society, O'Brien believes, the research university is likely to be surpassed eventually by ethical, political, or religious institutions.

Moral insight functions quite differently from empirical knowledge, since it does not begin with rational principles and proceed with research. It begins with experience, cumulative and personal, which we call tradition. Thus it is rooted in history, and this makes it entirely unlike empirical knowledge. In this it resembles the arts and not the sciences. Science discards its past; art keeps its past. "The modern university, if it justifies itself by its own inner logic of science, may assume that Copernicus surpasses Ptolemy. But the proper model for the university tradition would be to note that Stravinsky did not finally eliminate Bach from the musical canon. . . . Morality, like music, is essentially a tradition of performance that develops its own reflective reason."

Moral excellence, unlike that of science, must grow out of what is already known, out of historical tradition and inculcated habit. Moral habit must then grow into moral philosophy (in opposite fashion from growth in the sciences, where reflection must precede performance). Morality is "sectarian" in that it can begin nowhere but in an already inhabited and particular tradition. But to go forward it must be open to critical comparison with other traditions, and then to both emulation and contradiction of what it studies.

It is not impossible, O'Brien thinks, for a university to master both intellectual and moral inquiry. The sectarian colleges of the past failed by being unwilling to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submit either their intellectual or their moral convictions to the challenge of open engagement. But his book is an appeal for a university reform that would enlarge, not crimp, the ambition of modern higher education.

This reviewer is more skeptical, and his doubt is stirred by two historical oversights in O'Brien's fascinating account. First, the author is too kind to the denominational colleges of the past. In fact, they were not actively even trying to develop a learned belief or a critical moral tradition. Their religious beliefs figured almost nowhere in the curriculum; they were sequestered into worship, social service, and the extracurricular study of Bible or catechism. The course of formal study made almost no room for intellectual cultivation or even consideration of what they claimed to be their reason for gathering on campus: a shared faith. Ironically, the moment when these denominational colleges finally developed both the resources and the desire to mingle faith and learning was the very moment when they began to lose their faith in faith as a suitable sponsor for their institutions.

O'Brien's second oversight is not, I think, something he would deny, but it is something he needed to notice: that there is no live tradition which is not the possession of a lively moral and intellectual community. To accomplish what he so convincingly prescribes a university would have to claim a sponsoring community whose tradition it both identifies with and criticizes, and it would have to acknowledge that tradition as an advantage and a privilege, not unlike the way in which the contemporary university regards the scientific method.

The modern university, however, does not seek sponsorship; it seeks subsidy. If, for its intellectual integrity, the modern university needs to be engaged also in the scrutiny and grooming of its moral insight, reflection, and performance, then it would need to claim a sponsoring community and tradition. That community might be political—say, the United States of America, or the State of Missouri, or the City of Chicago—or it might be religious—say, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, or Orthodox Judaism.

The general assumption has been that political sponsorship rules out serious moral inquiry and that religious sponsorship rules out serious intellectual inquiry. But the problem is more complex. One would be foolish to suppose that civil sponsorship would entail a more generous moral tradition than religious sponsorship. One would also be foolish to expect a religiously sponsored university to elaborate a moral wisdom which

Stephen V. Monsma
and
J. Christopher Soper
editors
Equal
Treatment
of Religion in a
Pluralistic Society

Few areas of public policy in the United States are as politically contentious and legally confusing as church-state relations. The traditional approach to these issues, rooted in a strict separation of church and state, is being drawn into question today by increasing levels of religious pluralism. This timely book provides the first comprehensive analysis of a new paradigm for discussing church-state relations — equal treatment, also sometimes referred to as neutrality — that has growing popularity in Congress and has recently been used in several Supreme Court rulings. Eight leading scholars of constitutional law and political science here trace the development of equal treatment theory, consider its implications for public policy and church-state relations, and evaluate it from a number of ideological perspectives.

CONTRIBUTORS: Derek H. Davis, Robert A. Destro, Carl H. Esbeck, Charles L. Glenn, Gregg Ivers, Michael W. McConnell, James W. Skillen, and Rogers M. Smith

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would make easy sense to a civil community.

O'Brien, in any case, helps us to understand better why this twofold undertaking of moral and intellectual education has so inveterately failed. He certainly stands at a far distance from President Hutchins of his alma mater, who had this to say in 1938:

> Some three hundred college and university presidents recently answered a questionnaire in which they were asked to list, in the order of importance, what they regarded as the purpose of their institutions. Mental discipline, which ranked first sixty years ago, according to a recent analysis of the college catalogues of the day, now ranks twenty-second among the twenty-five avowed purposes of our institutions of higher learning. It is preceded by such objects of higher education as good manners. "Good manners" have no place in the program of higher education. "Character" has no place in the program of higher education. College develops character by giving young people the habits of hard work and honest analysis. If it tries to teach character directly, it succeeds only in being boring.

Have You Found Jesus?

THE HUMAN CHRIST: THE SEARCH FOR THE HISTORICAL JESUS. By CHARLOTTE ALLEN. *Free Press. 359 pp. $26.*

Reviewed by
Luke Timothy Johnson

WHEN JOURNALISTS take on intellectual history, the results are sometimes frightful and sometimes delightful. In the present case, reading gives more pleasure than pain. Charlotte Allen—a contributing editor to *Lingua Franca*—is a journalist who has made several earlier forays into the world of academic religionists, most notably in her piece devoted to the Jesus Seminar, "Away With the Manger" (*Lingua Franca,* February 1995), and in essays on the quest for Q and the political fissures within religious studies departments in American universities. Her short essays have always combined analysis of thought and personalities of thinkers; her deadpan observations on the presence of Hollywood director Paul Verhoeven (*Robocop, Basic Instinct, Starship Troopers*) at the Jesus Seminar were priceless. Now she has undertaken, with impressive success, a full-length study of that peculiar intellectual adventure story known as the quest for the historical Jesus.

Her project could not be more timely, for the "Jesus Wars" (in Peter Steinfels' phrase) have been raging now for over a decade in publications, press releases, and lecture halls as an intense side-conflict in the wider culture wars within which the study of religion finds itself enmeshed. Given the amnesiac condition of religious consciousness generally, many observers (and apparently some participants) think that the battle over the humanity of Jesus is an altogether novel phenomenon. Others (especially participants) accept Albert Schweitzer's remarkable study, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (1906) as both exhaustive and authoritative. A more general account that is more comprehensive than Schweitzer as well as more accessible to nonexperts has long been needed. Allen's book, while scarcely perfect, goes some way toward meeting that need.

LUKE TIMOTHY JOHNSON *is the Robert W. Woodruff Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins at Candler School of Theology, Emory University.*

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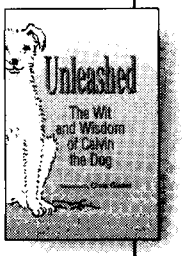

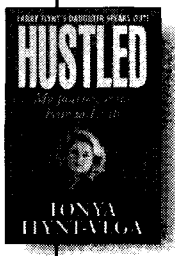

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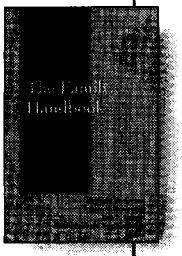

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ALLEN IS NOT herself an academic and she brings to her research a certain calculated naivete. She has no particular awe of the giants buried in the old books and is willing to stumble about in the world of ideas, assuming that ideas are always connected to people and therefore always to culture as well. As a result, her perceptions have a freshness and clarity that are rarely found in guild productions. Although her account is thick with name and incident, she develops three major themes. The first is that the significance of Jesus' humanity goes back to the beginning of Christianity and the specific desire for a non-supernatural Jesus has roots earlier than Schweitzer suggested. The second is that the debate over Jesus' identity has always been caught up in larger intellectual and cultural contexts. The third is that the first and greatest loss was Jesus' Jewishness and that the greatest gain in some recent historical work is its restoration.

Grasping Allen's concern for Jesus' Jewishness makes intelligible an arrangement of chapters that otherwise appears odd. She begins with "Jesus' Jewish World," but apart from the opening paragraphs, leaves Jesus out of her sketch of Jewish life in Palestine under the empire. Only in the last chapter, "The Return," does she show how one stream of current research—sometimes called "The Third Quest" in distinction from the "New Quest" associated with the Jesus Seminar and its allies—places Jesus back into that context. The larger point of all her nine intervening chapters, then, is that all other forms of the search for the human Jesus were a form of intellectual detour, or, to use her implied metaphor, exile.

In contrast to her bemused detachment in reciting earlier excursions, Allen's concluding paragraph offers a positive endorsement of this third quest: "With its emphasis on the continuity between the Jewish worlds of Jesus and the Judaism-infused theology of a crucified Messiah, the Third Quest seems to promise some results of lasting value—perhaps because it represents a full-circle return. Jews and Christians will probably never reach a consensus on who Jesus was, but the importance placed by the third questers on the ancient prophetic tradition offers a way in which Jews and Christians might reach a consensus on what Jesus *was like.*"

ALLEN ALSO ARGUES that the debate over the humanity of Jesus is both older than Schweitzer let on and more culturally diffuse. In "The Quarrels of the Ancients," she demonstrates how the significance of Jesus' humanity was at the heart of early Christianty's Christological debates: if it was emphasized too much, one committed the heresy of Nestorianism; if it was slighted by his divinity, one committed the heresy of Monophysitism. Allen recognizes, however, that more than logomachy or even ecclesiastical positioning was involved: "For Gregory [of Nyssa] and others of his era, defining Jesus' identity was of the utmost importance inasmuch as they believed that their own salvation depended on their imitating his blameless life." And she recognizes that the Chalcedonian formula ("two natures, one person") forged under the influence of Leo the Great in 451, while expressing the conviction of faith that in the human Jesus God was somehow truly encountered, also tended to perpetuate the tendency to focus on one side of the equation or the other. For much of the history of Christianity, the divinity was celebrated with such fervor that the humanity could sometimes seem only an abstract concession to dogma.

Allen's third chapter is aptly named "The Paradigm Shift," for the pendulum swing away from the divinity of Jesus to his humanity—including a focus on his words and deeds rather than upon his character—was part of a larger intellectual shift that involved the perception

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of the Gospels (and all of Scripture) less as divine revelation and more as historically conditioned, human compositions. She agrees with Schweitzer that the development of historical criticism of the New Testament and the quest for the historical Jesus have gone together from the eighteenth century to the present. Schweitzer, however, began with Herman Samuel Reimarus (1694-1768) and regarded the quest as one of the intellectual glories of German scholarship. He paid only meager attention to French or British writers, and only when—as with Ernest Renan (1823-1892)—failure to do so would have been obvious.

Allen, in contrast, properly acknowledges the fundamental contribution of the French Catholic Richard Simon (1638-1712) to the development of biblical criticism, and the pioneering importance of the English Deists to the search for a thoroughly de-supernaturalized Jesus. Indeed, she credits Thomas Chubb (1679-1747) with originating the quest, anticipating by several decades the work of Reimarus. Chubb's *True Gospel*, she asserts, "has served as the template for nearly every subsequent reconstruction of the historical Jesus, from Reimarus' seventh Fragment of the 1760s to the Jesus Seminars of the 1980s and 1990s": Jesus was a plain-speaking prophet whose life was embroidered in a series of increasingly unreliable Gospels; and it was Paul of Tarsus who invented Christianity.

ALLEN'S FINAL THEME occupies her middle seven chapters, from "The Talk of the Coffee Houses" to "Avant-Garde Fashions." The titles are revealing: the progression of biblical criticism is connected not only to the explicit intellectual influences exercised by thinkers from Locke to Heidegger but also to the personal quirks of the critics and questers themselves. Allen is fascinated by David Strauss' *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined* (1835), but she is even more intrigued by the way a young Englishwoman named Mary Ann Evans translated Strauss, Spinoza, Comte, and Feuerbach for the enlightenment of the British populace before turning her hand to the novel, and becoming George Eliot. She is pleased to note the relatively short distance separating such American academics as Shailer Matthews or Shirley Case Jackson and such popular novelists as Lew Wallace (*Ben-Hur*) and Lloyd C. Douglas (*The Robe*). She has the journalist's instinct for good gossip, and her relish at finding the small biographical links between the espousers of ideas is obvious.

Nowhere is this more the case than in her chapter "Sex and Death for the Cinema." Beginning with a detailed account of Ernest Renan and his *Vie de Jesus* (1863), she traces the lurid trail of romantic, orientalizing, and antiquarian literary treatments of Jesus like those of Gustave Flaubert (*Herodias*), Oscar Wilde (*Salome*, *De Profundis*), and Henryk Sienkiewicz (*Quo Vadis*), leading in more recent times to Nikos Kazantzakis' *Last Temptation of Christ* and to film treatments ranging from Cecil B. DeMille to Martin Scorsese.

Albert Schweitzer described the quest for the historical Jesus as a history of ideas, as though the world of books were all that mattered. Charlotte Allen describes the quest as an intellectual history in which ideas are embedded in the lives of real people and real cultural contexts. She shows how the search for the human Jesus has always been a very human search.

The Rebbe's Son

ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL: PROPHETIC WITNESS. By EDWARD K. KAPLAN and SAMUEL H. DRESNER. *Yale University Press. 416 pp. $35.*

Reviewed by **David Novak**

ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL (1907-1972) was the most significant Jewish thinker ever to live and work in

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America. His significance is such that without him no Jewish thinker of my generation (I was privileged to be his student) and the generations after could utter the name "God" with intelligent passion in the public square. The world of religious discourse for Jews in this society and culture has been forever changed by his life and work. It is now simply impossible to think through the sources of the Jewish tradition—as opposed to merely describing them—without Heschel being either in the background or at one's side.

Nevertheless, despite Heschel's indelible mark on American Judaism, he did not come *from* America but *to* it. That fact is extremely important to bear in mind, especially for those who are discovering Heschel's theological works for the first time. For Heschel brought to America spiritual and intellectual resources that were not present here, certainly not during the years of his formation. Unlike most of the European Jewish scholars who came to these shores, Heschel made the transition from Europe to America in a way that not only did not dilute or dispel his deep Jewish roots, but that enabled him to grow from those roots new branches, whose emergence would have been unforeseen in the world of his youth. This first volume of a projected two-volume biography of Heschel is now the best historical source for tracing his personal and intellectual trajectory in the years before he arrived in America as a refugee in 1940.

THE KEY TO understanding Heschel's roots and his development is to know that he was born and raised in a unique kind of Jewish royalty: the world of the hasidic "rebbeim." The hasidim (literally the "pious ones") are part of a mass movement that began among the Jews of Eastern Europe almost three hundred years ago, and that is still very much alive today. The movement is characterized by simplicity of life, deep religious fervor, and messianic expectation. The leader of a hasidic community (and there are many) is the rebbe. A rebbe is much more than an ordinary rabbi, one traditionally authorized to render decisions in Jewish law and teach sacred texts. In the hasidic world, a rebbe is the closest Jews have come to experiencing prophecy after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E. The rebbe in very significant ways is the living connection between his disciples and God; his prayers on behalf of his disciples are considered to have extraordinary influence with God, and his counsel to his disciples has normative force. A rebbe is even considered capable of performing miracles. To be a rebbe is to be part of dynastic royalty—more often than not the office is passed down from father to son, and the mother often is also from the family of a rebbe.

Abraham Joshua Heschel was born in Warsaw in 1907 to Rabbi Moshe Mordecai Heschel, known as the "Pelzovina Rebbe," and Rivka Reizel Perlow, the daughter of the "Noviminsker Rebbe." Although he was not the eldest son in his family, Abraham Joshua was by virtue of his precociousness seen to be a prodigy, destined to become a rebbe himself at an early age. He drew upon the most distinguished hasidic ancestry on both sides, going back directly to Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov, the founder of Hasidism in the early 1700s. Although his father died when he was but eight years old, he was virtually adopted by his maternal uncle, the Noviminsker Rebbe, and educated under his tutelage. From earliest childhood, those nearest to him were convinced he was destined for greatness.

Considering his background, one would have expected Abraham Joshua to have become a rebbe in Poland and to have continued the family tradition. But his mother's strong will opened for him a different way. Like many daughters and sisters of rebbeim, Rivka Reizel was a powerful personality in her own right, capable of getting what she wanted—in this case for her gifted son—even in a society where women were to be modestly deferential to male authority, publicly at least. Rivka Reizel exercised her power by preventing an early marriage for Abraham Joshua. For dynastic and other reasons, young men destined to become rebbeim were often married in their early teens. Had this happened to Abraham Joshua, his future as a rebbe in the ancestral mold would have been virtually sealed. Although one could ascribe a variety of motives to his mother's nonconformist act, Heschel himself saw it as her belief that he was destined to play a role in his adult life other than that of a traditional hasidic rebbe. Her act allowed him, he thought, to become a different type of rebbe to a larger, and stranger, world.

WHEN HESCHEL was eighteen he left for Vilna to spend two years at a Yiddish gymnasium. This can be seen as an unusual, but important, transition to the wider world of European culture. Ostensibly, his purpose in going to Vilna was to prepare himself for entrance to a European university, for up until that time Heschel's education was exclusively in talmudic and hasidic texts, although he began writing Yiddish poetry even earlier. But there is more to it than that.

Although Yiddish was the spoken language of virtually all the Jews of Eastern Europe, using Yiddish as a literary language in place of classical Hebrew (the language of Heschel's very first literary compositions) was a tremendous concession to the growing secular influences on East European Jews. For many intellectuals of Heschel's generation, the move to literary Yiddish was a conscious move away from the tradition of Judaism and its authority, even though they remained Jewish culturally. For Heschel, though, it was a vehicle for

DAVID NOVAK *holds the J. Richard and Dorothy Shiff Chair of Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto.*

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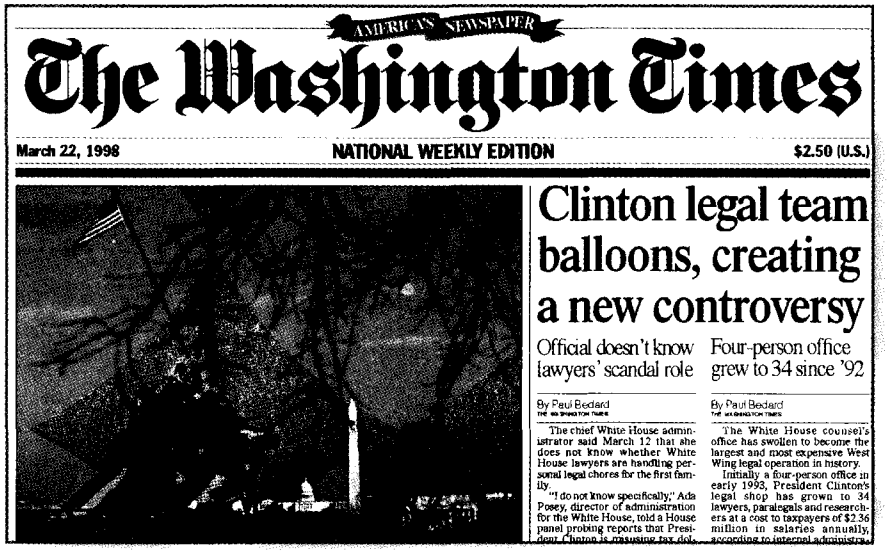

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The Washington Times

March 22, 1998 NATIONAL WEEKLY EDITION $2.50 (U.S.)

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Official doesn't know lawyers' scandal role

By Paul Bedard
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

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Four-person office grew to 34 since '92

By Paul Bedard
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

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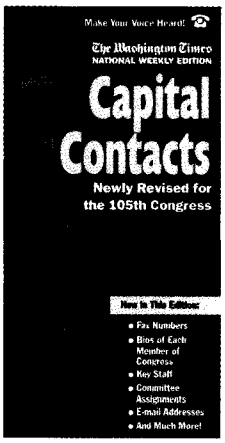

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bringing the spiritual riches of the tradition into a new Jewish milieu, showing that traditional Judaism could not and should not be surpassed by Jewish modernity. Heschel's Vilna sojourn enabled him to move from a basically medieval Jewish milieu to a modern Jewish one before moving on to a world in which he would have contacts with assimilated Jews—and with non-Jews. One senses that without this transitional phase, Heschel might have gone the way of many Jewish intellectuals from the traditional milieu of Eastern Europe who went straight to the West, which made most of them too eager to simply interpret Judaism in an essentially non-Jewish way. Vilna helped make Heschel a modern *Jew* before he had to become a modern man.

After preparing himself for entrance to a German university, Heschel began his studies in 1927 at the University of Berlin, at the time one of the most avant-garde universities in the world. His main subject there was philosophy; and he did not continue his studies in the Orthodox rabbinical seminary in that city, but became a fellow of a liberal institution known as *die Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums*, even though his personal belief and practice could still be described as "orthodox." During his Berlin years, Heschel availed himself of the wide variety of intellectual and cultural opportunities of Berlin, and he made many significant personal contacts. Had things not radically changed in 1933, he would have no doubt become a leading intellectual presence in Germany, like his older colleague Martin Buber, whose complicated relationship with Heschel is well described in this book.

After January 1933, with the rise to power of Hitler, Heschel's life as a Polish Jew and work as a doctoral candidate at the University of Berlin became more and more precarious. He struggled to get his dissertation published before German universities stopped granting degrees to Jewish students, a testimony to Heschel's determination and, ultimately, good fortune.

HIS DISSERTATION was a tour de force. Using the methods of the phenomenological philosophy he learned at the university, Heschel worked out a highly original view of prophetic consciousness, seeing the biblical prophets as those who were in "sympathy" with God's concern, that is, who "felt with" what Heschel called "divine pathos." This topic can be traced back, I think, to Heschel's hasidic roots. The rebbeim that Heschel knew so intimately in his youth might very well have been the living models for how the ancient prophets actually functioned. The dissertation shows Heschel's desire to bring modern Jews, indeed modern people in general, back to a relationship with the living God of the Bible. This had been the mission of the founders of Hasidism, Heschel's own ancestors, in an earlier era; it was Heschel's passion. Edward K. Kaplan and Samuel H. Dresner beautifully evoke Heschel's faith and his ability to communicate it. God was never a stranger in his life, as his favorite hasidic rebbe, Rabbi Menahem Mendel of Kotzk, might have put it.

The last part of the book deals with Heschel's attempt to escape Germany and Poland for a new life, first in England and finally in America. He would not have made it were it not for the efforts of Dr. Julian Morgenstern, the president of Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, the Reform Jewish seminary, and a man very different from Heschel in background and religious outlook. It was Morgenstern who got Heschel a visa to teach in his institution, saving Heschel from the Holocaust. Many members of his family were not so fortunate.

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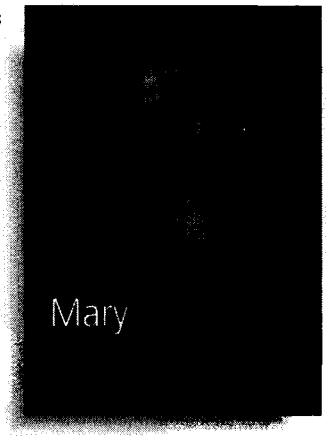

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This account of the first part of Heschel's life is extremely well written, and is respectful without being implausibly adoring. That is an accomplishment for these co-authors, who obviously loved their teacher. Their book helps us see how an extraordinary life produced extraordinary thought. If I, as someone familiar with most of the events described in this book, having heard them from Heschel's own mouth, could not put it down, how much more will that be true for those who did not know Heschel but can only hear about him. Even to hear about him is a blessing.

Shall We Clone?

Human Cloning: Religious Responses. Edited by Ronald Cole-Turner. *Westminster/John Knox. 151 pp. $15.*

Reviewed by **Gilbert Meilaender**

The nature of public policy debates in the United States in recent years has tended to exclude—or, at least, to suggest that we ought to exclude—religious considerations. They are suspect in the public square. Cloning has proven to be an exception, though we shall have to see whether that proves true over the longer run. The very possibility of cloning human beings seems to cut so close to the heart of our identity that it almost requires responses at least quasi-religious in character. Moreover, the report on cloning by the National Bioethics Advisory Commission (NBAC)—prepared in response to a request from President Clinton—gave considerable attention not only to law and philosophy but also to religion.

Human Cloning, containing a number of relatively short essays on cloning and including also a few statements from religious denominations and the recommendations of the NBAC, is therefore a useful addition to public reflection on the subject. Most of the essayists, but not all, see attempts to clone humans as, at the least, very problematic morally. The essays focus primarily on the issue of human cloning, but some give some attention to animal cloning as well. Thus, for example, Donald Bruce, while granting that not all animal cloning can or need be ruled out on moral grounds, notes that the Church of Scotland (for which he is Director of the Society, Religion, and Technology Project) "has declared as unacceptable its use in routine animal production, where natural methods exist but have been side-stepped on the grounds of economics or convenience."

What of human cloning? We need, first, to distinguish between several different things this might mean. It might mean—and most of the public attention has taken it to mean—an attempt to clone, gestate, and bring to term a human being, to do for human beings what has already been done for mice and for the lamb "Dolly." But it might also mean the attempt to clone human embryos for research purposes—and this, in fact, is where the real focus of scientific interest is at the moment. Such embryo research might teach us more about cell differentiation and early embryo development, it might make possible greater success in bone marrow transplants, and it might help us to treat more successfully degenerative diseases and spinal cord injuries.

Ronald Cole-Turner, editor of this volume, while somewhat reluctant to endorse cloning aimed at gestating and giving birth to a child, is, on the whole, supportive of cloning embryos for research purposes (though he thinks it

Gilbert Meilaender *holds the Board of Directors Chair in Theological Ethics at Valparaiso University.*

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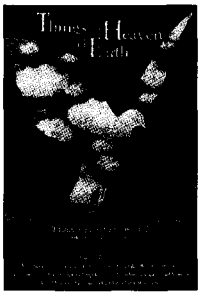

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would be wrong to carry out such research without a more thorough public discussion than we have thus far had). The early embryo, up to fourteen days of development, is sometimes referred to—as by Cole-Turner in his essay—as a "pre-embryo" or a "pre-implantation embryo." Because the possibility of "twinning" exists for that long in the first stages of embryonic development, one could argue that no individual human being can yet be present—and that, hence, experimentation should be permitted. Whether one could argue it persuasively is another matter. Donald Bruce notes that cloning "is a fundamentally instrumental act towards two unique individuals—the one from whom the clone is taken, and the other the clone itself. This is not the same as twinning. There is a world of difference ethically between choosing to clone from a known existing individual and the unpredictable occurrence of twins of unknown nature in the womb."

The "pre-embryo" is more accurately called an "unimplanted embryo." That formulation makes clearer the role that human will and choice play here. Advocates of embryo experimentation will generally say, as Cole-Turner does, that the embryo "should be accorded respect." It is, though, a little hard to give cash value to this phrase when we are contemplating creating an embryo, using it for research purposes, and disposing of it at or before fourteen days. Brought into existence for our own instrumental purposes, with the limits of its existence determined by our will and choice, with—again by our choice—no future life prospects, the embryo is a classic example of the weak at the mercy of the strong. Unless and until someone can pour more meaning into the word "respect" in this context, the argument will remain doubtful.

WHAT OF THE SORT of cloning that has most dominated public attention—that aimed at giving birth to a child who is the genetic twin of its "ancestor"? Most of the essays in the volume focus on this issue. Roger Shinn, who taught ethics for many years at Union Theological Seminary in New York, offers a clearly written essay, "Between Eden and Babel," in which he explores in brief compass many of the moral issues involved as well as some of the first ethical discussions of cloning more than thirty years ago after tadpoles had been cloned. Well worth one's pondering is the fact that, as he puts it, by contrast with sexual reproduction, cloning "is essentially a conservative process." That is, sexual reproduction is always open to continuous innovation. Sex and death are closely related. We wither and die so that others—who are like us, yet different—can replace us in the cycle of life. By contrast, "plants that reproduce by cloning are more or less immortal." Were cloning applied to animals—or to the human animal—individual specimens might die, but a genetic identity would persist, "unconstrained by a predetermined life cycle." Looked at from this perspective, one might wonder whether cloning would reflect a deep unwillingness to live in faith and hope, a desire to take the future entirely into our hands and be its guarantor.

In occasionally oblique prose, Brent Waters offers useful reflections on the meaning of cloning for the family bond. He argues persuasively that we have to think more generally about the meaning of the relation of parents and children. If we wait to think about this until the issue of cloning arises, our thought will surely come too late. If we think of the family simply as individuals who consent to cohabit because such an arrangement meets their needs, we will never find reason to worry about assisted or collaborative reproduction. But, then, we may also be unable to describe how a family serves to provide a sphere of "unconditional belonging." Children become the outcome of reproductive decisions aimed at satisfying the desires of parents. While such notions of family have become all too common among us, they do not depict a place of unconditional belonging for the child who falls short of parental desires. Cloning as a form of assisted reproduction would only exacerbate these problems by inviting us to suppose that members of a family might be replaceable.

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GIVEN SUCH REASONS for concern, why might one support, or even advocate, human cloning? We should, Ted Peters suggests, "welcome the new world of expanded choice." Peters notes the dangers—especially for children. We may learn to think of them as commodities. Over these commodities we may feel the need to exercise "quality control." (Indeed, that is hardly a danger just for the future. It happens all the time in the present through prenatal diagnosis.) I admit to a little puzzlement about why one who seems to take such dangers seriously would simultaneously welcome the world of expanded choice. More options does not necessarily mean greater freedom. Indeed, what at first looks like greater freedom can sometimes turn out to be very constraining indeed. "We cannot," Peters writes, "allow our ethics to derive from our fears of scientific advance." Why not is unclear to me. The idea that we must always go forward, or the idea that, having gone forward, we will nonetheless be able to find ways to think of the children whom we have made and whose quality we have controlled as something other than products is, at best, puzzling, and at worst, all too self-confident. As Roger Shinn puts it, referring to the long history of eugenics, "We may claim that we can rise above those past errors, but that is exactly the time when we had better distrust ourselves."

These essays and others that I have not discussed indicate that cloning is an issue on which the Church may find a public voice that others are ready to hear. The essays also suggest, however, that, even on a subject such as human cloning, Christians may bring quite different perspectives to bear on our public discussions. Granting the contributions they can make to our public life, perhaps it is still the case that the first task of believers is to learn again what makes them distinct from the larger public sphere, lest, when the opportunity presents itself, they have nothing to say that others could not think of without their help.

A Vanishing World

FROM THE HOLY MOUNTAIN: A JOURNEY AMONG THE CHRISTIANS OF THE MIDDLE EAST. By WILLIAM DALRYMPLE. *Henry Holt. 483 pp. $30.*

Reviewed by
Robert Louis Wilken

AT THE END of the sixth century a monk from Palestine by the name of John Moschos set out from the flourishing monastic world in the Judean desert east of Jerusalem to visit the equally vibrant religious communities in the Egyptian desert. After spending some time living among the monks up the Nile River, he settled at the Lavra of Aeliotes on Mt. Sinai where he remained for ten years. His purpose was to see at first hand the way of life practiced by Christian monks outside Palestine and to collect their stories and sayings.

After returning to Palestine for a brief period he again set out, this time northward, traveling up the coast through Phoenicia to Syria and from there to Cilicia in the southeastern corner of Asia Minor (Turkey). At some point he was joined by his dear friend Sophronius, also a monk from Palestine (who as Jerusalem's patriarch was later to have the unhappy assignment of handing over the holy city to the victorious Muslim Caliph in A.D. 638). From Asia Minor the two friends returned to Egypt where they remained for several years. Then they sailed to Rome to see at first hand the monasteries of the ancient Christian capital. But John died while in Rome, and Sophronius dutifully carried his friend's body back to Jerusalem to be buried at the monastery of St. Theodosius a few miles south of the city. There he rests to this day, and alongside lies his friend Sophronius, who died shortly after the Muslim conquest. Today a single nun inhabits the monastery and tends the graves.

All the time John was living in the various monastic centers of the Eastern Christian world, he took notes of what he saw and heard. In Rome before he died he was able to finish a beautiful and unforgettable book called *The Spiritual Meadow* (now available in English translation from Cisterician Publica-

ROBERT LOUIS WILKEN *is the William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor of the History of Christianity at the University of Virginia.*

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tions), a warm, edifying, and often humorous account of the holy men and women he had met.

A FEW YEARS AGO William Dalrymple, an English travel writer, set out with *The Spiritual Meadow* in his knapsack and pen and notepad in hand to retrace the steps of these ancient holy men. His route was not precisely that of Moschus—he began at Mt. Athos which did not exist in Moschus' day as a monastic city and ended in Egypt—but with admirable persistence and at times courage, he attempted, often under such difficult and dangerous circumstances as civil war in eastern Turkey, to discover what remains of the world that Moschos inhabited and of the Christian communities he celebrated. One of the ironies of Dalrymple's journey, however, is that he sometimes found more representatives of Middle Eastern Christian groups in London than in the places he visited. "Such are the humiliations of the travel writer in the late twentieth century: go to the ends of the earth to search for the most exotic heretics in the world, and you find they have cornered the kebab business at the end of your street in London."

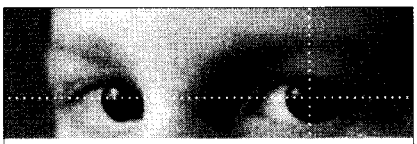
From the Holy Mountain is a sad and melancholy book that evokes a time when the entire eastern Mediterranean, the territories now occupied by Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Israel and the West Bank, and Egypt, was bound together by a Christian civilization and culture. And it chronicles, if only in fleeting glimpses, the slow but seemingly inevitable disappearance of Christian life in much of the region. In Antakaya (Antioch) in Turkey, the ancient city where Jesus' disciples were first called Christians and the seat of one of the five ancient patriarchates (the patriarch now resides in Damascus as he has for some eight hundred years), only two hundred Christian families remain. Within the last generation thousands have left for Germany, Brazil, and Australia, and the gatekeeper of the Orthodox Church predicted that the Christian community would eventually die out. "The young are still emigrating, mainly to Brazil. Christians may have been here since the time of the apostles, but I doubt whether there will be any here at all in twenty years' time."

From the Holy Mountain is not a book of history. It is a personal and impressionistic account written in the first-person style of a travelogue, a lively and engaging collection of vignettes laced with bits of Middle Eastern culture, politics, architecture, religion, and enough historical information to orient the reader, all served up in graceful and cultivated English prose. On historical matters Dalrymple is not always reliable—he has John of Damascus preaching in Constantinople when he means John Chrysostom, and he has the irritating habit of using the term "near contemporary" for figures who are separated by two hundred years—but he has done his homework and he is a keen observer of people and places and especially of ancient buildings. And he has a weighty sense of the burden of the past.

THE BOOK CENTERS chiefly on five areas—eastern Turkey, the city of Aleppo in Syria, Beirut in Lebanon, Israel and the West Bank, and Egypt—and it offers an entertaining and illuminating way to become acquainted with the religious, social, and political worlds in which the different Middle Eastern Christian communities live. It is a sobering account. Although the present status of the Christian communities varies considerably from country to country, "the pattern of Christian suffering," as Dalrymple puts it, "was more complex than I could possibly have guessed at the beginning of this journey; it was also more desperate."

Some of the most heartbreaking pages in the book record the stories of elderly Armenians in eastern Turkey who recall the massacre of whole villages by the Turks early in the century. Today, reports Dalrymple, there is a systematic effort on the part of Turkish authorities to eliminate the remains of Armenian life and religion altogether. The names of Armenian villages have been changed and beautiful ancient churches are simply vanishing from the face of the earth. "Soon," says the curator of the Armenian museum in Jerusalem, "there will be virtually no evidence that the Armenians were ever in Turkey."

In Lebanon, Christianity is still strong, but the civil war, the divisions between the various Christian groups, the complications brought about by the proximity to Israel, the harsh militancy of the Maronites—especially their military arm, the Phalange—and the perception of the Muslims that the Christians are not Arabs make it hard for Lebanese Christians to look to the future with hope. Dalrymple is more sanguine about Syria, but the future there is equally uncertain.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When Assad, to whom the Christians look for protection, is gone, some fear an ugly backlash. And in Syria, as elsewhere in the Middle East, the ceaseless stream of emigrants saps the spirit of the Christian communities. Several years ago, when I visited Hasakeh, a town in northeastern Syria with a sizeable Syriac Christian population, it seemed that everyone I met had an uncle or brother or cousin running a Mediterranean restaurant in Sweden.

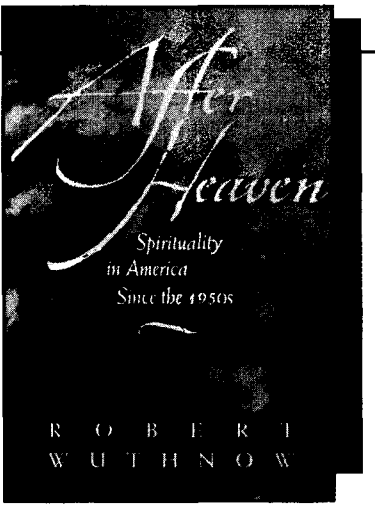
In Israel, most Christians Dalrymple spoke to, whether Armenian, Greek, or Arab, felt besieged and isolated. In Jerusalem the pressure by Israelis on Christians to sell their property is relentless. Armenians began to settle in Jerusalem fifteen hundred years ago and have lived there continuously since ancient times. Early in the century thousands, fleeing the Turks, found refuge in Jerusalem's Armenian quarter. But today the young are emigrating and even the Armenian shopkeepers who are so much a part of the commercial life of the old city are disappearing.

IN THE GREAT STRUGGLE between the Israelis and the Arabs, the Arab Christians seem a historical curiosity, finding a place on neither side of the divide. To the Israelis they are Arabs, to the Arab Muslims they are Christians—and to Westerners they are invisible. In the face of the competing claims of Israelis and Arabs, the historic Christian stake in Jerusalem and the Holy Land appears irrelevant and anachronistic. Yet the Christian roots in the land are too deep, too irrevocable, and the memory too long for Christians there to imagine that there is no future in the land to which Christianity is "native," as St. Jerome put it. When Dalrymple asked the Patriarch of Jerusalem whether he thought the end of the Christian presence was imminent, he said: "Do not judge a light by the size of its container. Even a small oil lamp can give light to a big room."

In Egypt, home of the largest Christian community in the Middle East, the sheer number of Christians assures survival. But Egypt is the one country where Christianity is "unambiguously threatened by a straightforward resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism." For the Copts this treatment at the hands of their fellow Egyptians is particularly bitter. In the nineteenth century Copts were active in the effort to overthrow Ottoman rule, and formed part of the intellectual leadership of the Arab cultural awakening. Today they are fearful and apprehensive. One priest at a church that had been bombed by militant Muslims refused to talk to Dalrymple. The less said about this matter the better was his message as he slammed the door in his face. But then as Dalrymple was leaving the priest came out of his house and said, "I'm sorry. I am a priest. If you want to learn to pray, I can help. . . . But if you want to talk about politics . . . " Shrugging his shoulders he said, "I think you have not spent long in Egypt. When you have been here longer, you will understand."

ALAS, THE HARD TRUTH is that for Christians in the Middle East politics does make a difference, for politics and religion are often one. It is beyond the ken of most Western Christians to imagine what it means to be Christian in that part of the world and to be involved in communities that have lived for centuries under Islam. With few exceptions Christians of the West have always been masters of their own destiny. Even the three hundred years during which the Greek Church lived under Ottoman rule seem but a passing moment when compared to the long centuries of Muslim hegemony in the Middle East. *From the Holy Mountain* is a perceptive, well-written, and nicely illustrated account of a vanishing world, but it is not a call to Christians to awaken from their passivity about the fate of fellow Christians in the Middle East. For that one has to read Nina Shea's *In the Lion's Den*, especially its chapters on the Sudan and Egypt. But Dalrymple writes with feeling, and he makes one take notice, especially in the affluent and indulgent Christian West, of a Christian world where every thought, every word, every action is viewed in light of one thing: survival.

Dalrymple is not hopeful. On his final page he writes: "Christianity is an Eastern religion which grew firmly rooted in the intellectual ferment of the Middle East. John Moschos saw that plant begin to wither in the hot winds of change that scoured the Levant of his day. On my journey in his footsteps I have seen the very last stalks in the process of being uprooted. It has been a continuous process, lasting nearly one and a half millennia. Moschos saw its beginnings. I have seen the beginning of its end." Let us hope he is wrong.



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The Best of Intentions

SOMEONE ELSE'S HOUSE: AMERICA'S UNFINISHED STRUGGLE FOR INTEGRATION. By TAMAR JACOBY. *Free Press. 614 pp. $30.*

***Reviewed by* Scott McConnell**

WHATEVER HAPPENED to racial integration, frequently proclaimed as a national goal in the early 1960s? In *Someone Else's House* former *New York Times* staffer Tamar Jacoby, while lamenting the waning of the aspiration it represented, notes that the word "integration" now sounds as dated as "nylons" or "gramophone." Contemporary liberals now promote "diversity"—a term which acknowledges differences of perspective between races and ascribes a positive meaning to them. Jacoby wonders what killed the idea that American blacks and whites could acquire a true commonality of spirit.

She seeks an answer in the experiences of New York, Detroit, and Atlanta during the 1960s, '70s and '80s—each city representative of the varied ways the civil rights movement broke apart after the major nondiscrimination battles were won. The result is an extremely rich book, deeply researched, eminently fair-minded, and written with an eye for the telling detail. As a history of recent American race relations it is a formidable achievement, and can be read with enthusiasm even by those who might not concur with its analysis and conclusions.

The blush has long disappeared from the reputation of John Lindsay's mayoralty (1966-1974) and Jacoby does not seek to restore it. No one can avoid the two dreadful legacies of his administration: welfare rolls that more than doubled to over a million, and budget holes that left the city teetering on the brink of insolvency for decades. But how great were the hopes stirred by the first Lindsay campaign! Here was a sublimely handsome, supremely self-confident, liberal, can-do WASP (now there's a vanished historical type) committed to ridding New York and maybe the country of the racial injustice that had festered since America's birth. In 1965, the national press couldn't get enough of him, and at least in terms of the energy he devoted to racial issues, he didn't disappoint. The new mayor's readiness to walk the streets of Harlem or Bedford Stuyvesant in shirtsleeves at the first sign of trouble took genuine physical courage—and probably did head off more serious conflagrations. Unfortunately, Lindsay's peacemaking led him to seek accommodation with the most demagogic of black activists. Sonny Carson, then embarking on a long career as Brooklyn agitator, had an open line to a top Lindsay aide, which he used as a rope to jerk City Hall officials around the city.

AT THE CENTER of Jacoby's New York account is the Ocean Hill-Brownsville school battle, where the best of liberal intentions led to disaster. Ford Foundation officers, imbued with utopian attitudes about education, were allowed to set up and fund a plan to turn over management of several Brooklyn school districts to "the community." The experiment empowered local black educators, produced aggressive rhetoric against Jewish school teachers, and left a residue of bruised feelings between two groups whose cooperation in past civil rights battles had been exemplary.

Jacoby is justly critical of this kind of readiness to cut deals with black racial nationalists, but her own account shows how limited Lindsay's options were. In New York after 1965 (or even after 1960) pro-integration black community leaders hardly existed, and Malcolm X was far more popular than Martin Luther King on the streets of Harlem. No one who mattered in the black community was ready to argue that black "acculturation" (the term used by Jacoby) to the educational and behavioral norms of the American white mainstream was essential to black advancement. But having made racial progress, dialogue, reaching out, empowerment, etc. the keystone of his mayoralty, Lindsay had little choice but to dance with the militants. In retrospect, today's New Yorkers might have reason for gratitude that he succeeded at least in heading off a major race riot.

If Lindsay's New York showed the limitations of what could be achieved by accommodation, Detroit shows how bad things got when the appeasers were overwhelmed. For much of the 1960s the city had a whiz-kid white liberal integrationist mayor (Jerome Cavanaugh) and a business elite committed to opening up more opportunities for blacks and to investing in the inner city. In 1967, the Big Three automakers scrapped their decades old employment guidelines, no longer inquiring about high school diplomas, work experience, or even prison records in an effort to get more blacks on the assembly line.

But unlike New York, Detroit suffered a full-scale riot, unleashing a crime wave that has never really ended. After 1967 whites no longer wanted to live in the city. They weren't drawn back by the gaudy Renaissance Center, a mega-million dollar effort to anchor businesses downtown, and they resisted efforts to integrate their children, fighting a Michigan governor's elaborate plan to create racially mixed schools by busing inner city and suburban children around the metropolitan region. So blunt and devastating is Jacoby's brief description of Detroit classrooms, unruly places where pupils could reach the eighth grade without mastering the alphabet, that the resistance of suburban parents to the busing plan needs no deeper explanation.

In the end, black Detroiters voted in Coleman Young, a charming and rascally racial nationalist, who

SCOTT MCCONNELL *is a writer living in New York City.*

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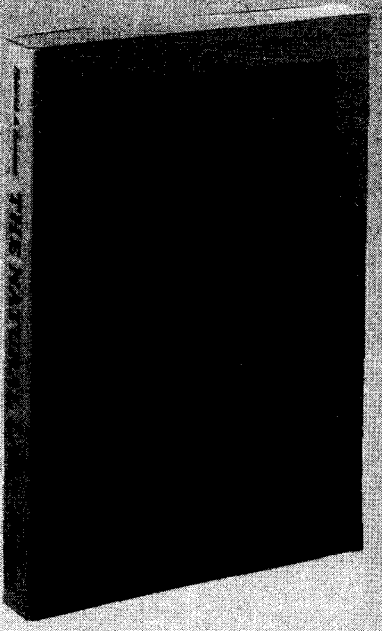
The Natural Law
A Study in Legal and Social History and Philosophy

By Heinrich A. Rommen
Introduction by Russell Hittinger



Originally published in German in 1936, *The Natural Law* is the first work to clarify the differences between traditional natural law as represented in the writings of Cicero, Aquinas, and Hooker and the revolutionary doctrines of natural rights espoused by Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. Beginning with the legacies of Greek and Roman life and thought, Rommen traces the natural law tradition to its displacement by legal positivism and concludes with what the author calls "the reappearance" of natural law thought in more recent times. In seven chapters each Rommen explores "The History of the Idea of Natural Law" and "The Philosophy and Content of the Natural Law." In his introduction, Russell Hittinger places Rommen's work in the context of contemporary debate on the relevance of natural law to philosophical inquiry and constitutional interpretation.

Heinrich Rommen (1897–1967) taught in Germany and England before concluding his distinguished scholarly career at Georgetown University.

Russell Hittinger is professor of philosophy and law at the University of Tulsa.

229 + xxii pages. Introduction, translator's preface, select bibliography, index.

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saw the city's destiny as an African American mecca where whites weren't really needed or wanted. The criminal justice system collapsed, black juries refused to bring convictions, and burned out city blocks began returning to meadow. Yet Young won reelection again and again.

OF THE THREE CITIES, Atlanta's race relations are the least troubled, "as good as it gets" in Jacoby's phrase. But the triumph is not integration but "power sharing"—a deal between the white business elite and the rising black political class. Atlanta's commercial establishment read the national winds when the civil rights revolution arrived and made adjustments. By the mid-1960s, new corporate headquarters and capital were streaming in from all over the country, and office towers were shooting up: Birmingham, Alabama, a southern town of exactly Atlanta's size at the end of World War II, fought the civil rights movement and remained a backwater.

The growing pie left both groups much to divide, and Atlanta pioneered rigid racial quotas and set-asides. In the building of a new international airport, dozens of office towers, and a vast subterranean mid-town shopping and cultural space (the Underground), black contractors were guaranteed a certain percentage. Often this was pure graft, with politically connected black front men simply collecting checks for signing their names on the papers. Other black subcontractors did participate in construction, while being patronized by their white "partners." Few who got their start in such deals ever expanded beyond the setaside sector. Several black builders became rich—but they were in business before the color-coded deals began and in Jacoby's estimate would have made it anyway.

The black poor received almost nothing from all this, and efforts to jump-start a black small-business class may have been the saddest failure of all. Many franchises in the Underground were reserved for black shopkeepers, who, it was said, would employ young people. The franchisees received subsidized start-up loans and all kinds of good press, but none of it was an adequate substitute for entrepreneurial mettle or experience. When the businesses failed, the beneficiaries were resentful and expected the political class to bail them out. Designed as a vehicle to bring black and white Atlantans together, the Underground became a source of rancor—increasingly crime-ridden and avoided by white shoppers.

IN RELATING THESE HISTORIES, Jacoby provides ample evidence that key white business and political leaders were willing to work for black advancement and integration; her criticism of the '60's-era liberal es-

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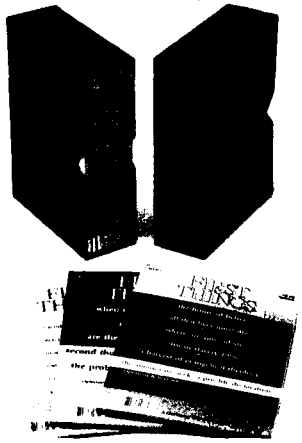

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tablishment is not its lack of resolve but its readiness to tolerate black separatism, color-coded standards, and the like. Integration, she would argue, failed because the pro-integrationists weren't tough-minded and rigorous enough.

The weak point in this argument is its assumption that the integration consensus in the 1950s and early 1960s was sufficiently broad or deep that better tactics could have made much of a difference. It is true that after the nationally televised confrontations in the deep South in the early 1960s, there arose a groundswell of sentiment for greater fairness toward black Americans, and for the end of racial discrimination. But for integration? Few in the 1960s could even agree on what the term meant, and Jacoby cites research showing that whites and blacks still hold divergent views of what constitutes a desirably integrated neighborhood or workplace. (Whites consider 2/13 an appropriate black/white ratio; blacks prefer when the races are in rough numerical balance.) Integration may have been a goal of the litigators and social scientists who were the driving force behind *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court's landmark 1954 school desegregation decision. But Dwight Eisenhower's mild skepticism about the ruling was surely more representative of the feelings of most Americans, and it is not clear they had changed much by the 1960s, or that they would ever change other than at an incremental pace.

Here Jacoby might usefully have grappled with Norman Podhoretz's "My Negro Problem and Ours," an essay published in 1963. Its argument, built on Podhoretz's reminiscences of attending integrated schools in a racially mixed New York neighborhood in the 1940s, was that proximity and interaction of whites and blacks, far from leading to any sort of harmony, exacerbate tensions and even inflame hatred between the groups. Integration was agonizingly difficult not because of the pull of old segregationist law or custom, but for deeper psychological and social reasons. Podhoretz's pessimism was to be substantially confirmed in the years following the essay's appearance.

Jacoby hopes for a new push for integration—a wiser one that doesn't rely on color-coded solutions and leans more heavily on black "acculturation." People, she writes, can be ethnic "on the weekends." But *Someone Else's House* provides little ground for belief that ethnicity can be so easily relegated. Even the "white" melting pot, a model for the most far-reaching integration hopes of the '60s, required generations of simmering, and still has its detractors. (Note the alarms about intermarriage now sounded by many leading American Jews.)

Whatever its weaknesses (and these may boil down simply to mat-

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ters of opinion), *Someone Else's House* is outstanding as contemporary history, one of the strongest books in a decade that has already seen publication of several good ones in this field. However much has changed in the American racial landscape since the 1960s, its core lesson is highly relevant: the best of intentions are no guarantee of racial harmony.

BRIEFLY NOTED

WHY MARRIAGE MATTERS: REASONS TO BELIEVE IN MARRIAGE IN POST-MODERN SOCIETY. By GLENN T. STANTON. *Piñon. 222 pp. $14.*

How many times have you heard it said that marriage is less risky if you live together first? That parents who can't get along should divorce for the good of the kids? That single people are happier than married? Notions like these seem as obvious to postmodern folk as their contraries did to our grandparents. No doubt you have heard them from your friends, your relatives, and your colleagues. Quite possibly you have contended over them with your minister, your representative, or your children's teacher. You know they are all canards, and have read somewhere that they have been proven such, but can't put your finger on where. Seek no further. There is no need to enter the maze of the sociological literature; this book is all you need. Author Glenn T. Stanton shows that from every angle—the good of our children, the good of adults, and the good of society—the case for one-time lifelong marriage and against cohabitation is not only strong, but overpowering. Though he does not hide his Christian faith and motivation for writing, his book is not a full-fledged Christian apologetic for matrimony. Stanton hints invitingly at the deeper foundations of the institution but, aiming at the broadest possible audience, he focuses on what can be understood by nonbelievers—especially what theologians of general revelation would classify under the "law of the harvest," the principle that bad individual and communal choices have inescapable bad consequences. Especially noteworthy is the epilogue on "The Future of Marriage," which offers numerous practical suggestions not only for stemming illegitimacy, cohabitation, and divorce, but also for strengthening marriage itself. More like an unusually thoughtful handbook than a theoretical treatise, this book does not require elaborate analysis, but should be widely read by citizens, policy makers, counselors, ministers, and denominational leaders—and given to those of our cohabiting friends who are open to second thoughts.

— J. Budziszewski

BLAISE PASCAL: REASONS OF THE HEART. By MARVIN R. O'CONNELL. *Eerdmans. 210. $16.*

Although, in my opinion, there can never be too many studies or biographies of the French mathematician and Christian apologist Blaise Pascal, he is not, unfortunately, a pot of gold for publishers in the way, say, C. S. Lewis is. But at least we have Marvin O'Connell's fine study, a worthy addition to Eerdmans' new series, The Library of Religious Biography. This biography is particularly suited to those unfamiliar with the arcana of seventeenth-century moral theology and the controversies that swirled around the Jansenists and Jesuits.

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Many of the specific issues in that debate no longer engage us, but the underlying motivation of the debate still affects the Church across the denominational spectrum, which is why this lucid and edifying biography of perhaps the greatest Christian apologist in modern times is so welcome.

— *Edward T. Oakes, S.J.*

HANNAH ARENDT: AN INTRODUCTION. By JOHN MCGOWEN. *University of Minnesota Press. 194 pp. $17.95.*

McGowan is a professor of English and Comparative Literature and his treatment of Arendt takes on a literary spin. Not overburdened with the arcane vocabulary in which much current literary theory is cast, the text is lively and engagingly written. The author scores some good points along the way, including a reminder that, for Arendt, political equality—that place where citizens meet—"does not apply to them vis-à-vis each other in *all* their relations." This points us in the direction of civil society; citizens need places to interact "apart from the state—but also apart from the intimacies of private life." McGowan's defense of Arendt against her detractors over *Eichmann in Jerusalem* is exactly right: She "was not 'blaming the victims' but was chronicling the immensity of the moral collapse precipitated by the Nazis." Where I detected some slippage in McGowan's account lies in the absence of a discussion of Arendt's treatment of the epistemological dimension of totalitarianism—its assault upon truth—and in his tendency to overassimilate Arendt's view of "the self" to current identity politics. Arendt isn't so much about "politics as identity disclosure" as politics as a space within which much of what we are can appear in public and be seen, heard, and known. For her, politics always preserves the "space between" people, while much of current identity politics aims to meld people into group identities and to diminish other features of the self. The markers of identity are not, as in contemporary politics, matters of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and the like but far more particular and individual. That said, this is a welcome addition to the growth industry known as Arendt studies.

— *Jean Bethke Elshtain*

COVENANT AND COMMITMENTS: FAITH, FAMILY, AND ECONOMIC LIFE. By MAX STACKHOUSE. *Westminster/John Knox. 195 pp. $18 paper.*

One of the leading Christian ethicists of our time and a professor at Princeton Theological Seminary, Max Stackhouse offers a bracing alternative to much current flaccid talk about "family values." The author is a United Church of Christ minister and his views are richly informed by a Reformed theology that views "covenant" as key to our relationships, both with God and with one another. While he is sympathetic to more Catholic and sacramental understandings of marriage, Stackhouse clearly intends to reappropriate in lively ways distinctively Protestant understandings of community. In addition to his finely attuned ecumenical sensibilities, he demonstrates a keen insight into the cultural dynamics that militate against covenantal responsibility, and a rare conscientiousness in presenting alternative views fairly. In Stackhouse's thoughtful treatment, marriage and family are very great gifts indeed, but they never become idols. They are always part of an emphatically (but by no means exclusively) American tradition of human association made possible and necessary by the covenant with others, and ultimately with the Other.

UNWILLING GERMANS? THE GOLDHAGEN DEBATE. Edited by ROBERT R. SHANDLEY. *University of Minnesota Press. 295 pp. $17.95 paper.*

Few books in recent years have provoked such a storm as Daniel Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners* (see review by Richard John Neuhaus in FT, August/September 1996). This new volume is a valuable collection of essays and reviews, mainly published in the German press, on the book and the controversy surrounding it. As Holocaust scholar Norman G. Finkelstein observes, Goldhagen's book is "worthless as scholarship," but the attention it received "tells us something, albeit unfortunate, about the current state of intellectual culture." In the present volume, Goldhagen gets ample opportunity to respond, but his defense of his scurrilous tract is manifestly a lost cause.

J. I. PACKER: A BIOGRAPHY. By ALISTER MCGRATH. *Baker. 340 pp. $19.95.*

An evangelical Anglican who made his way from Oxford to Canada, where he teaches at Regent College in British Columbia, J. I. Packer is without doubt one of the most respected figures in world evangelicalism. His books of theology, written in a style both engaging and accessible to the general reader, have sold in the millions. *Christianity Today* goes so far as to say his influence among evangelicals is second only to that of C. S. Lewis, and that may well be right. Alister McGrath, Packer's student and former colleague, gives a fine evaluative account of Packer's life and work, and makes judicious comments on Packer's very prominent role in the ongoing project known as "Evangelicals and Catholics Together." In this readable biography, Packer comes across both as a man of brass-bound convictions and as an easy conversationalist eager to explore alternative renderings of life and faith. The book is also a reliable guide to the currents shaping contemporary evangelical thought.

THE C. S. LEWIS READERS' ENCYCLOPEDIA. Edited by JEFFREY D. SCHULTZ and JOHN G. WEST, Jr. *Zondervan. 464 pp. $22.99.*

A hundred years after his birth and

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thirty-five after his death, there is no letup in enthusiasm for the life and work of Lewis. This volume, which is a must for Lewis aficionados, provides a guide to his immense oeuvre and to the societies, web sites, and controversies it continues to generate. Insiders will note that the very controversial Walter Hooper, who has laid dubious claim to much of the Lewis legacy, is firmly but charitably put in his place. On your way to your Lewis recovery group, don't leave home without this book.

LETTERS TO GABRIEL. By KAREN GARVER SANTORUM. *CCC of America (Campus Circle Drive, Irving, TX 75063). 132 pp. $14.99.*

A beautifully poignant little book of daily letters a mother wrote to her unborn child who lived only two hours after birth. Her husband Rick Santorum, U.S. Senator from Pennsylvania, was at the time leading the fight against partial-birth abortion. Despite a foreword by Mother Teresa, an introduction by Dr. Laura Schlessinger, and warm endorsements from the likes of George F. Will, the book was rejected by mainstream trade publishers, which is a shame. But that should not prevent readers from getting a copy, and maybe an extra one to pass on to a friend.

THINGS IN HEAVEN AND EARTH: EXPLORING THE SUPERNATURAL. Edited by HAROLD FICKETT. *Paraclete (Brewster, Mass.). 197 pp. $20.*

A remarkable little book that truly is about, if one may be permitted the phrase, first things. Fourteen essays by philosophers, novelists, journalists, and others who address aspects of our living in a reality much more wondrous than is allowed by the cramped and fetid secularisms of our time. Especially noteworthy are psychologist Paul Vitz on the role of the will in believing and not believing, Deal Hudson on why understanding the supernatural is essential to maintaining the integrity of the natural, and novelist Doris Betts on "the four last things." Altogether, a fine exercise in apologetics that you might want to share with friends who are either unthinkingly credulous or unthinkingly cynical about the worlds of which our world is part.

JESUS OF NAZARETH: HOW HE UNDERSTOOD HIS LIFE. By RAYMUND SCHWAGER. *Crossroad. 187 pp. $14.95 paper.*

For more than a century New Testament scholars have disputed the "messianic consciousness" of Jesus. A professor of dogmatic and ecumenical theology at Innsbruck suggests we cut through the scholarly disputes by going to the Gospels themselves. A strength of his reconstruction (although he might object to that term) is the placement of Jesus solidly within the Jewish tradition as the fulfillment of the Old Testament. Unaddressed are dogmatic questions about the two natures, human and divine, that might have a bearing on what Jesus "understood" and on the meaning of "understanding" in his unique instance. Nonetheless, well worth a read.

THE UNMAKING OF AMERICANS: HOW MULTICULTURALISM HAS UNDERMINED AMERICA'S ASSIMILATION ETHIC. By JOHN J. MILLER. *Free Press. 320 pp. $25.*

There is an uncomfortable divide on the right over immigration and its impact on civil society. Miller, the pro-immigration national political reporter for *National Review* and contributing editor for *Reason* magazine, suggests that the ideology of multiculturalism is responsible for the obvious failure of recent immigrants to assimilate, documenting how a pervasive multiculturalism in the immigration bureaucracies affects immigration policy and the immigrants themselves. Miller's opponents on the left are pro-immigration relativists, while those on the right tend to think that multiculturalism exaggerates important cultural differences that are already present among immigrants and which threaten any chance to rebuild a strong national society. Miller wants to propose a third way. The question for all three parties, however, is whether American culture is strong enough and moral enough that it can and should impose itself on other cultures within its borders. Miller unabashedly votes yes. This discussion is occasionally marred by a demonizing of opponents rather than engaging their best arguments, a vice all too common in this important national debate.

MEDIEVAL EXEGESIS: THE FOUR SENSES OF SCRIPTURE. Volume 1. By HENRI DE LUBAC. *Eerdmans. 466 pp. $45.*

The work of the great French scholar de Lubac was one of the formative influences on the Second Vatican Council. The present volume, first published in 1959 and now appearing in English with a foreword by Robert Louis Wilken, is part of the admirable "Ressourcement" series published by Eerdmans and reflects the direction of renewal in biblical studies affirmed by the Council. The "four senses" of Scripture employed in the patristic and medieval periods are the historic, allegorical, moral, and anagogic (the last referring to the spiritual end to which the Bible directs the reader). In a book of prodigious and frequently repetitious scholarship, de Lubac urges a new appreciation of the "spiritual" exegesis of Scripture against the often reductionist critical methodology of the modern era. The appearance of this important work in English is most welcome and will, one hopes, occasion the writing of other books that will make de Lubac's scholarship and argument more accessible to the general reader, and especially to preachers of the Word.

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WILLIAM OF OCKHAM: QUODLIBITAL QUESTIONS. Volumes 1-2. Translated by Alfred J. Freddoso and Francis E. Kelly. *Yale University Press. 702 pp. $140 cloth, $35 paper.*

William of Ockham (ca. 1285-1347) is considered one of the most influential philosophers, theologians, and political thinkers of the millenium. But as Alfred Freddoso points out in his introduction, this reputation seems to have been gained almost entirely apart from a close study of his writings, which usually seem radical only if misread. The Yale Library of Medieval Philosophy has decided to reissue this 1991 translation of some of Ockham's most mature views in an affordable paperback, allowing a wider audience a chance to decide for themselves whether this controversial Franciscan was really the Father of modernity and of the Reformation as he sometimes is made out to be.

HUMAN DIGNITY AND CONTEMPORARY LIBERALISM. By BRAD STETSON. *Praeger. 200 pp. $55.*

Political liberalism has many critics, but relatively few who engage it on its own principles. Brad Stetson has taken a central theme of liberalism—its humanistic promotion of the dignity of the individual—and shown how even against that standard, it is a failure. The second part of the book is an application of his analysis to religion, political correctness, feminism, race, abortion, character, and other hot-button issues. A bold yet fairminded contribution to the cultural debates of our day.

THE MARCH OF FREEDOM: MODERN CLASSICS IN CONSERVATIVE THOUGHT. By EDWIN J. FEULNER, Jr. *Spence. 375 pp. $29.95.*

The founding president of the enormously influential Heritage Foundation addresses himself to major conservative figures and, in most cases, offers substantial excerpts from their works. Included are Russell Kirk, Frank S. Meyer, Midge Decter, Michael Novak, and Whittaker Chambers. A solid introduction to a centrist conservative tradition that holds in tension, for the most part successfully, its fissiparous propensities.

THE ENDURING EDMUND BURKE. Edited by IAN CROWE. *Intercollegiate Studies Institute. 221 pp. $24.95.*

Eighteen shorter essays by American and British students of Burke, with a final essay by Mark C. Henrie that relates the Burkean tradition to the sundry schools of contemporary conservatism in this country. An intelligent colloquium on political philosophy to which, were he still writing, one imagines Edmund Burke would gladly have contributed.

Of State

Psalm 86

Listen, God, I need
You, hear me.
    Cheer me
In this darkness.
Give me back
(My soul is ready
Now to leave me)
Any answer.
I don't question
You believe me.
Teach me trust
In the returning
Promise, shame
My enemies
In public, enter
My heart in your
Book of splendors.

Laurance Wieder

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THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

Setback in Rome

In June the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) formally approved a "Joint Declaration" (JD) on the doctrine of justification that had been worked out over many years of theological dialogue with the Catholic Church. Shortly after that, Rome made its official response in a joint statement issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) and the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity (CCU). These developments received considerable play in the general media with stories about an "historic agreement" on the chief doctrine that had separated Lutherans and Catholics for almost five hundred years. The reality is somewhat more complicated than that.

Rome did officially "receive" JD in the sense that it affirmed that very significant progress had been made in removing past misunderstandings, and in moving toward full agreement on what it means to say that the sinner is justified by faith. However, many of the Catholics and Lutherans involved in producing JD are saying—mainly off the record, for the present—that the Roman response is, in the most important respects, a rejection of the declaration. JD proposed that, with the new understandings achieved by the dialogue, the mutual condemnations of the sixteenth century no longer apply, and remaining differences over the doctrine of justification are not church-dividing. The Roman statement does not accept that proposal.

It would be an understatement to say that the theologians involved in the dialogue, both Lutheran and Catholic, were taken aback by the Roman response. During the process, Rome had indicated problems with aspects of the declaration and, almost up to the last minute, revisions were made to take those concerns into account. The participants in the dialogue thought they had been assured that JD would be approved by Rome. Certainly that was the understanding that informed the LWF's approval of the declaration. In the immediate aftermath of the statement by CDF and CCU, the mood among dialogue participants was bitter and despondent. One Lutheran pioneer of the dialogue declared that the theologians, both Lutheran and Catholic, had been "betrayed" by Rome. For decades to come, he predicted, it would be impossible to reestablish confidence in any theological dialogue with the Catholic Church.

Such assertions, and there are many of them, may be excessive. Perhaps when the dust settles, the theologians will go about the task of putting together the pieces and resuming the dialogue in a way more likely to meet with approval from Rome. At present, however, it is not too much to say that they are in a state of shock. Their sharp criticism of the Roman response has several parts. In the first of its eight points, the Roman response says that JD's treatment of the Lutheran teaching that the Christian believer is "at the same time righteous and sinner" (*simul iustus et peccator*) is unsatisfactory. On this, says Rome, it would be hard to say that the formulation of JD is not "touched" by the anathemas of the Council of Trent. Here and elsewhere, the theologians complain, the Roman statement gives a less than generous reading of JD, putting the most unfavorable construction on the text.

Moreover, it is said, Rome criticizes JD for what is said in sections of the document specifically written to provide a "Lutheran perspective." That is to say, JD includes several different kinds of statements. There are sections that state what Lutherans and Catholics can affirm together about justification. These sections, presumably, are the heart of JD's achievement. They state the substantive agreement. Then it is acknowledged that Lutherans and Catholics have different ways of giving theological expression to the truth of justification—ways that are fully in accord with the substantive agreement stated earlier. So there are distinct sections offering, respectively, Lutheran and Catholic perspectives on the substantive truths agreed to. The complaint is that Rome's response criticizes items contained in the "Lutheran perspective" because they do not employ the distinctively Catholic way of giving

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expression to the doctrine. The theologians answer, "But of course! That's why JD provides the different perspectives in the first place." The question that Rome should have addressed, they say, is whether the statements of substantive agreement in JD are acceptable.

Challenging the Enterprise

The same theologians bristle at Rome's point seven, which says that in the future the dialogue should focus on the entire teaching of the New Testament on justification. "Gratuitous and condescending," says one Lutheran. "As though in the course of the dialogue we had not done book-length studies of what the New Testament says on the subject. We don't need Rome to tell us we should take the Bible seriously." It is point six, however, that meets with the most vehement reaction. There Rome's response raises a challenge to the very structure of the dialogue itself, asking who the Lutheran partners really represent, and whether what they say can be trusted as a definitive word that will hold in the future. "This is really bad ecumenical form," says one Lutheran who has over the years risked criticism from fellow Lutherans for his effort to present Catholic positions favorably. Point six, he and others say, should have been raised thirty years ago when the dialogues were getting underway. There are obvious asymmetries between the LWF (and any other institution, for that matter) and the Catholic Church. Everybody has that difficulty in dealing with the Catholic Church. It is also a legitimate problem for Rome to raise, but that can be done in a way that is not insulting and does not undermine existing dialogues. Says one noted Catholic ecumenist: "From both its content and tone, I have the distinct impression that Rome's statement was written by somebody who is unfamiliar with the ecumenical process, does not understand it, and probably does not like it."

As of this writing, tempers are high. The Lutherans who had been strongly critical of JD, and there are many of them among German theologians in particular, are having a hard time not saying "I told you so." Most of them seem not even to be trying. Catholics and Lutherans who are actually part of the dialogue, while deeply disappointed, are cautiously examining what might be rescued from the Roman mishap. There are exceedingly delicate intra-Roman questions involved here as well, such as the respective roles of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Council for Christian Unity, especially since the latter was party to producing JD and presumably presented it for approval. The complex relationship between offices (called dicasteries) in the Curia is the subject of much speculation and little public knowledge.

Toward the Future

In the presently agitated atmosphere, one should not lose sight of the fact that Rome's statement does explicitly, strongly, and repeatedly affirm the dialogue itself and leaves no doubt that it should continue. It also affirms that JD is a great, although not entirely satisfactory, achievement. Whatever the disappointment of those who expected more, that should not be overlooked. While they no doubt could have been more felicitously expressed, legitimate concerns are raised in Rome's response. Especially is this the case with the difference between Rome agreeing to a doctrinal statement and the agreement of an association of churches such as the LWF.

Although there would seem to be unexplored ambiguities here, Rome's ratification of JD would make it, in some sense, part of the official teaching of the Catholic Church. At least it would be an official statement that JD is consonant with Catholic doctrine. Rome legitimately, although indelicately in this instance, inquires as to the magisterial status, so to speak, of the LWF's vote to approve JD. It cannot be said that the historic disagreement over justification has been resolved with the "Lutheran communion" since not all Lutheran bodies belong to the LWF. And what is to prevent the LWF from taking a contrary vote at some point in the future? Unlike the Catholic Church, the LWF has no track record of exercising anything like a magisterial teaching authority. And some in Rome may recall that it was not so long ago that the LWF took up the question of justification at one of its assemblies and concluded that there was no consensus among Lutherans as to what it means.

These and other questions must be carefully engaged in the continuing dialogue on the long way toward the hoped-for goal of healing the breach between Rome and the Reformation. There is no blinking the fact that Rome's response to JD is a setback, but it is in no way the end of the quest for unity. In ways not presently discerned, it may contribute to putting the Lutheran-Catholic and other dialogues on a more solid foundation. As John Paul II's 1995 encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* (That They May Be One) emphatically underscores, ecumenical engagement is not "optional" for the Catholic Church; it is an imperative built into the Church's very self-understanding as articulated in the Second Vatican Council's constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*. The present setback follows upon major disruptions also in the Anglican-RC dialogue. The Lutheran and Anglican cases are different in important respects, but these were viewed as the premier dialogues with the Catholic Church, and now both are dispirited and in a state of disarray. And, of course, the current fractiousness within Orthodoxy has cast a dark shadow over John Paul's fervent hope for reconciliation between East and

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West. These are very hard days for ecumenism, and one has to hope that Rome will take the initiative in pointing a more promising way forward to the realization of the Our Lord's prayer, "Ut unum sint."

And ECT?

Finally, the question is asked what bearing these developments have on the initiative known as Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT), and, in particular, its agreed statement on justification, "The Gift of Salvation." I believe the answer is that ECT is untouched by Rome's response to the Joint Declaration. Unlike the declaration, "The Gift of Salvation" is not an official statement, although it had and continues to have the strong encouragement of Rome. Moreover, the Lutheran formula of *simul iustus et peccator*, which was Rome's chief objection to JD, is no part of "The Gift of Salvation." With some exceptions, that formula and the Lutheran construal of it in JD is as alien to Evangelicals as it is to Catholics. Then too, the questions at the center of the Lutheran-RC dialogue—what is church-dividing disagreement and how might ecclesial reconciliation be effected—are not on the ECT agenda. They might possibly be the questions for another generation of Evangelicals and Catholics. At present and for the foreseeable future, however, ECT is intent upon deepening the understanding of one another as brothers and sisters in Christ called to the common task of evangelization and the renewal of culture. The message of ECT was very warmly received at the special Synod for America convened by the Pope in Rome last year, and in the months ahead will be carried forward in ongoing discussions with Evangelical leaders and Catholic bishops in Latin America. In sum, ECT is a conspicuous exception to the current ecumenical doldrums.

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ENCOUNTERED BY THE TRUTH

There is no point in arguing with the claim that Jacques Derrida is the most famous philosopher in the world today. The most famous at least among those who set academic fashions and their camp followers in the popular media. He is commonly called "the father of deconstructionism," an ill-defined intellectual disposition that is thought to give carte blanche to the denial of "objective truth" in the service of making up whatever "truths" suit one's fancy. Deconstructionism has provided a capacious playpen for queer studies, radical feminisms, and a wide range of debonair nihilisms that have taken exuberant advantage of the last several decades' sabbatical from the tasks of clear thinking. Little wonder that Derrida—along with Nazi-tinged Paul De Man and the late celebrant of the culture of death, Michel Foucault—has become a byword of derision among conservatives. Children of Heidegger all, they are thought to vindicate the truth that evil ideas, too, have consequences.

Over the years, Derrida has returned regularly to Johns Hopkins University where thirty years ago his deconstructionist manifesto first excited the neophiliac professoriate. In between there have been more than thirty books in which Derrida has maintained his reputation for being at the cutting edge, or, in the view of his critics, for taking French intellectual life over the edge into terminal silliness. As so often happens, the master is just a bit embarrassed by what his epigones have done in his name. Just a bit, mind you. He is careful not to jeopardize his celebrity standing, but he does want it understood that he is not responsible for all the bizarre things perpetrated in the name of deconstructionism. This was evident in a recent interview at Johns Hopkins in which he said that those who assert it is not possible to determine what is right and wrong are operating with a "relativistic image of deconstruction." He did not provide a nonrelativistic definition of deconstruction but appeared to suggest that his method, so to speak, was little more than the inculcation of modesty in what we claim to know for sure. There is a long tradition of French intellectuals sending signals through the medium of interviews, and there are no doubt books already in the works deciphering Derrida's enigmatic allusion to the existence of relativistic and nonrelativistic deconstruction.

Also enigmatic but suggestive of something genuinely interesting in Derrida's thought is what might be viewed as a theological turn. Asked about his role as the world's most famous philosopher (a description he does not dispute), Derrida opined: "I have been given this image, and I have to face some responsibility, political and ethical. It is as if I am indebted to—I don't know to whom—to thinking rigorously, to thinking responsibly. I am in a situation of trying to learn to whom, finally, I am responsible. To discover . . . who is hidden, who gives me orders. It is as if I have a destiny which I have to interpret and decipher." It does sound as though Mr. Derrida is taking the long way around to the Big Question. Perhaps, he seems to be saying, the decipherer is himself a "text" being deciphered. The deconstructionist deconstructed is but a small step from the discovery of the One to whom he is responsible and by whom he is destined. If or when he publicly takes that step, watch for the

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announcement that Jacques Derrida, once celebrated as the world's most famous philosopher, has in his old age taken refuge in religious obscurantism.

Abetting Atheism

I will not be surprised if he does take that step toward the truth ever ancient, ever new. Reading the Derridadists, one gets the impression that many of them think they are being terribly innovative and radical in making what is usually the adolescent discovery that there is no "totalist" explanation of the truth about everything. Sophomores of all ages, many of them tenured, declare themselves "liberated" by the realization that there are other ways of viewing almost everything, and then concluding that no one way can be "privileged" as the truth about anything. Their rebellion against the pretentious certitudes of Enlightenment rationalism, often defined as modernity, is in large part warranted, and that is the kernel of truth in "postmodernism." Postmodernism can be a lower-case relativism that is not Relativism but simply a disciplined modesty in search of the way things really are. This is not relativism as a dogma but relativism in the service of truth.

The dismal truth is that generations of moderns were miseducated to think that religion, and Christianity in particular, claims to be "objectively" true in a manner that eliminates the subjectivity of experience and perspective. Regrettably, that miseducation was and is abetted by Christians who confuse orthodoxy with the exclusion of intellectual inquiry. In this habit of mind, the truth is an object, a thing possessed, which must be assiduously protected from any thought that is not certified by Christian copyright. The alternative is to understand that truth is personal, less a matter of our possessing than of our being possessed in service to the one who is the way, the truth, and the life. As St. Paul reminds the Corinthians, our apprehension of that truth is always partial, something seen through a glass darkly in anticipation of the time when we will know even as we are known.

Few things have contributed so powerfully to the unbelief of the modern and postmodern world as the pretension of Christians to know more than we do. In reaction to unwarranted claims of knowledge certain and complete, modern rationalists constructed their religion of scientism, and postmoderns, in reaction to both, claim to know that nothing can be known. Please do not misunderstand. Christians do know the truth, saying with St. Paul (Romans 8:38-39), "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." As St. Paul goes on to say in Romans 11, "O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!" Christian thought is the open-ended adventure into searching the unsearchable and scrutinizing the inscrutable. Always, if it is authentically Christian, it ends up in doxology: "For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen."

Unthinking Christian polemics against "relativism" play a large part in creating upper case Relativists. The objective truth of revelation is perceived as an alien intrusion (heteronomy is the technical word) that is the enemy rather than the end of honest inquiry. The great thinkers of an earlier era—from Justin Martyr through Athanasius, Augustine, and Aquinas—understood that all truth is the truth of Christ. "In the beginning was the Word," the *Logos* who is the universal wisdom in which all wisdom finds its source and end. The thought that any truth can violate that truth is a violation of the law of noncontradiction, which cannot be violated without self-contradiction. Faced with the apparent choice of following Christ or following a truth that we know to be true, the course of fidelity is to follow the truth, for only thus will we be following Christ, if, as we are persuaded, Christ is the truth.

The inquiring subject is not eliminated but encountered by the truth of the Word. Our apprehension of the objective is always relative. This is true in matters both trivial and cosmic. How far is Kansas City? The answer is relative to whether you're in New York or in Peoria. Each of us apprehends the truth from his own circumstance, which is *a* standpoint that is not to be confused with *the* standpoint. Only the one who is both Alpha and Omega occupies *the* standpoint from which all is known, comprehensively and without remainder. St. Paul again: "Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience." If Christians exhibited more intellectual patience, modesty, curiosity, and sense of adventure, there would be fewer atheists in the world, both of the modern rationalist and postmodern irrationalist varieties. I have never met an atheist who rejects the God in whom I believe. I have met many who decline to commit intellectual suicide, and maybe spiritual suicide as well, by accepting a God proposed by Christians who claim to know more than they can possibly know.

Which brings me back to Jacques Derrida. I don't know whether he was just being cute in that interview. He does, unfortunately, have a record of posturing to put his devotees more off balance than they already are. But I would very much like to believe that he is resolved to think rigorously about

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to whom he is indebted, to whom, finally, he is responsible. That way, pressed honestly enough, lies the encounter with the truth that deciphers our deciphering and deconstructs our deconstructing. And, who knows, perhaps Derrida's disciples, too, will one day weary of their sophisticated knowingness and be opened to the truth that frees us from our poignantly compulsive liberations.

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BLAMING THE VICTIM

"Blaming the victim" is a charge all too lightly tossed about in recent decades. Anyone who dares to point out that the actions and attitudes of those in certified victim groups (blacks, women, homosexuals, et al.) might have contributed to their victimization is vulnerable to the charge of blaming the victim. This subject arises in connection with Albert S. Lindemann's *Esau's Tears: Modern Anti-Semitism and the Rise of the Jews.* Lindemann examines the ways in which the behavior of Jewish communities in Europe contributed to the anti-Semitism that produced the Holocaust. The book was assaulted in *Commentary* as an outrageous calumny, and Cambridge University Press was excoriated for having published it. For the most part, however, the book seems to have been ignored in this country.

Steven Beller, author of *Vienna and the Jews: A Cultural History*, takes a different (I do not say more balanced) approach in the *Times Literary Supplement.* He writes: "It is abundantly clear, to anyone with an open mind, that Lindemann's sympathies in a large sense lie fairly and squarely with the Jews, not only as passive victims, but also as active contributors to the modern world. It is just that he is also trying to understand why Jews were so hated, and also to keep an 'objective' sense of how much they were hated. It is one of his more controversial claims, but I think it is a correct one, that most Germans did not want to exterminate all Jews during the Second World War. I think he is also right to point out that most anti-Semitic thinkers and leaders before and after the First World War were not in favor of extermination of the Jewish race, and that anti-Semitism was not some sort of endemic plague which, of itself, led to the Holocaust. Instead, he shows that many European societies were relatively free of anti-Semitism, including Britain, Italy, Hungary (at least before the First World War), and France (except for the relatively brief period of the Dreyfus Affair). His point is that modern Gentile Europe was not one massive 'vale of tears,' but rather a place where many Jews could, and did, do remarkably well. He even points out that Germany and Austria, for all the real anti-Semitism in those countries, saw a flourishing of Jewish economic and intellectual endeavor, and that the supposed false optimism of the assimilant communities is perfectly understandable from a pre-Holocaust perspective."

If Lindemann sins, Beller suggests, it is a sin of exaggeration. "In a revealing analogy, Lindemann tries to liken the attacks on Jewish achievement and on Jewish feelings of superiority to recent attacks on 'Western Civilization' and the West's sense of superiority over the rest of the world. The attacks on both, he seems to be saying, are understandable but largely unjustified, even if both—the Jews and the West—have their faults. Lindemann's book, for all its faults, is a worthy and at times deeply moving attempt to show why this is so, in both cases. If the Jews were not and are not 'saints' in his estimation, and if their own thoughts and actions have at times played into the hands of those who would attack them, they are nevertheless, in his opinion, an overwhelmingly positive influence in the modern world. Similarly, even if Western Civilization has deep flaws, one of which, tragically, has been the prejudice against Jews, it too has been a positive force in the history of the world, and its virtues should not be completely and distortedly obscured by the exaggeration of its vices. Lindemann's own appeal to 'objectivity' and the possibility of understanding on a human level is an exercise in precisely those virtues of Western Civilization of which Jews have partaken and to which they have contributed so much. Read in that spirit, Albert Lindemann's book, while far from perfect, deserves praise and not calumny. It will be interesting to see whether it gets what it deserves."

The claim, inter alia, that "most Germans did not want to exterminate all Jews during the Second World War" is not terribly reassuring. They wanted to exterminate only the more offensive ones? The problem with the book is not that Lindemann tries to understand views that were held back then in a "pre-Holocaust perspective." That is a valuable thing to do. The problem is that Lindemann so enters into those views that he seems at times to be *writing* from a pre-Holocaust perspective. There is almost no subject today about which there is more moralistic cant than the subject of the Holocaust. For that reason, the friends of clear thinking are inclined to welcome books that go against the grain. *Esau's Tears*, however, crosses a line that, admittedly, is hard to draw with any exactness. It is the kind of exercise that gives a measure of respectability to the phrase "blaming the victim."

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The Self-Constituted Church

After the longest tenure in the magazine's long history, Father George Hunt, S.J., has been replaced as editor of *America* by Father Thomas J. Reese, S.J. The new editor's training is in social science and he has written prolifically on what he calls the management style of the Catholic Church. The Jesuit weekly is no longer the influence that it once was, but, along with the lay-edited *Commonweal*, it has generally tracked a moderate brand of liberalism that wants to be devoted to the Church while making no secret of its unhappiness with the Church's leadership, and especially with the pontificate of John Paul II. Fr. Reese unveiled his own understanding of the Catholic moment in last year's John Courtney Murray Lecture, "2001 and Beyond: Preparing the Church for the Next Millennium." The Murray Lecture has over the years been given by many distinguished and not so distinguished figures—proving the latter point, I gave it in 1984—and Fr. Reese's presentation might be read as a preview of what is to be expected from *America* in the years ahead.

Although barely attempting to disguise his own partisanship, Fr. Reese clearly wants to appear evenhanded in his treatment of conflicts between "conservatives" and "liberals" as those terms are understood in some circles—"liberal" meaning thoughtfully moderate and "conservative" meaning reactively fearful of change. The lecture concludes on an admirably compelling note: "If we are to be true to our Christian faith, love must be at the root of any strategy we adopt. . . . Jesus did not go to the cross shaking his fist and cursing his opponents. He went peacefully, witnessing to the truth with dignity, asking his Father to forgive those who crucified him. . . . We are called to witness to the world that we are Christians by our love, and not to scandalize the world by showing we are Catholics by our fights."

But fights there are, and Fr. Reese leaves no doubt about which side he is on. He begins by asking, "How do we change the church to make it ready for the next millennium?" He has earlier noted that Christianity is "a community of believers who are organized as a church." The concept of the church (in his text, always lower case) as a religious organization that we human beings create and control dominates this lecture and Reese's other writings, reflecting the fact that, as he repeatedly says, he speaks as a social scientist and not as a theologian. In response to his question—"How do we change the church to make it ready for the next millennium?"—he says somewhat too modestly, "I do not claim to know the answers." He goes on to say, "I am suspicious of those who do claim certitude, whether they be Vatican officials or members of the U.S. Catholic group known as Call to Action." Call to Action is generally viewed as a far-left advocacy group that agitates for what it views as democracy in the Church, the election of bishops, the ordination of women, homosexual rights, and cognate causes. Fr. Reese's suggested equivalence of the suspect certitude of Call to Action and of "Vatican officials"—presumably including the Pope and the magisterium—is noteworthy. Perhaps he does not intend to suggest such an equivalence, although the implication is reinforced as the lecture proceeds.

The Battle Is Over

In surveying the Catholic circumstance, Fr. Reese first takes up the challenge of sexual morality, and his conclusion is stark: "The real story here is that in the Catholic Church the battle about sex is over." Remember that he is speaking as a social scientist. "I do not deny the spiritual and theological character of the church," he says. It is simply that, as a social scientist, the question of whether the Church's teaching on human sexuality is true or not is not within his field of expertise. He is by no means enthusiastic about what has happened, but facts are facts. "That the church has not had a clear, convincing, and pastoral message to help people through the sexual revolution is tragic for both the church and the world. On sex, however, the battle is over; and there are no winners." Fr. Reese's declaration of surrender—for that is surely what it is—with respect to the Church's teaching on sexual morality includes no mention of abortion, a question on which the Church has been both firm and, considering the opposition, remarkably effective. It is not too much to say that there would be no pro-life movement in America or the world were it not for the Catholic Church. But any reference to the Church's role in the conflict between "the culture of life" and "the culture of death" is conspicuously absent from Fr. Reese's analysis of the Church at the edge of the millennium.

Fr. Reese offers a detailed and most doleful picture of the shortage of priests in support of his argument for dropping the requirement of celibacy. Because of the lack of priests, the great majority of Catholics will soon be deprived of both priests and sacraments, he says. "The celibacy rule may very well do what the Reformation could not—namely, declericalize and desacramentalize the Catholic Church." He does not mention recent, albeit modest, increases in the number of priestly vocations worldwide, nor American dioceses that are producing more than an ample number of priests. One might think that the latter phenomenon would be of particular interest to a social scientist. Nor, in this connection or any other, is there a mention of renewal movements such

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as the Legionaries of Christ and the Neocatechumenal Way that are attracting hundreds of priestly vocations. That, too, is a phenomenon of possible social scientific interest.

But such considerations would not serve Fr. Reese's argument. In his unremittingly bleak depiction of the alleged crisis, he lifts up a somewhat unusual factor premised upon the assumption of what might be called the episcopal will to power. "The hierarchy," he says, "is ignoring its own self-interest by refusing to ordain married men [because] married priests would tremendously increase the power of the bishops. . . . As every employer knows, the larger the labor pool, the easier it is to hire and fire employees." Moreover, "an employee with a family to support is more docile than one without." To the objection that this suggests a less than elevated view of the priesthood and episcopacy, Fr. Reese would no doubt remind us again that he speaks only as a social scientist.

On the subject of the ordination of women, he is, as they say, more nuanced. He notes what he believes is the strong support for ordaining women among Catholics in Europe and America, and anticipates that support will increase elsewhere "as women in other parts of the world become better educated." Of course, the magisterium has said that the Church is not authorized to ordain women and therefore cannot do it. Reese comments: "I believe that the only reason the Pope has not declared this teaching infallible is that the Vatican realizes that to do so would put the whole question of infallibility up for debate. As long as infallibility is kept in the closet and not used, Catholics don't worry about it. If it were used to define a teaching opposed by the vast majority of Catholics, then the doctrine of papal infallibility would be put at risk."

That is a passage of considerable interest. Perhaps not surprisingly, Fr. Reese fails to mention that the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) has said that the teaching on the impossibility of ordaining women to the priesthood is infallible. The coy response offered by some is that CDF is not infallible, as though the CDF statement did not have the Pope's explicit approval. The fair-minded reader of Fr. Reese's lecture is invited to infer that the Church can and should ordain women. Nor would such a reader be unwarranted in wondering whether Fr. Reese intends to question whether the Church, in fact, possesses infallible teaching authority. But of course he is speaking as a social scientist, not as a theologian. The inference and the wonder are made unavoidable, however, by the fact that women's ordination (which is a matter of doctrine) immediately follows the discussion of the ordination of married men (which is not a matter of doctrine) in his response to the problem of a shortage of priests. Following immediately upon women's ordination and infallibility, we are told that a "growing number of American women" see the Church as "riddled with sexism" and are alienated by her position not only on ordination but on birth control, lay preaching, inclusive language, and other issues. Because it stands "with the status quo against the inevitable movement of history," we are told that there is "a serious risk that the church will lose women in the next century the way it lost European working-class men in the last."

To be sure, Fr. Reese is speaking as a social scientist. He is presumably not saying what he thinks as a theologian or, for that matter, as a Catholic. It is a peculiar way of speaking for one who is, after all, a priest of the Church and is, in the same breath, sharply criticizing the Church for not persuasively communicating her teaching. I am sure it is not what Fr. Reese intends, but it looks very much like encouraging people to disagree with the Church's teaching and then demanding that the Church change her teaching because—as a social scientist, of course—you have discovered that people don't accept the Church's teaching. It is more than a little annoying when a person taunts authority and then teases readers to guess at what he is really saying. Some might think it just a touch adolescent. I am reminded of the childhood game "Dare You," which turned on whether or not one had crossed the line chalked on the sidewalk. "Did!" "Did not!" "Did!" And so forth. It was great fun, but it is not a game for grown-ups.

Readers who are simply trying to understand what Fr. Reese is saying are, one fears, likely to be dismissed by him as conservatives who, he says, "opt for an ecclesiology inspired by Joe McCarthy" and are given to denouncing people who disagree with them. Not, apparently, that Fr. Reese is seriously worried about those conservatives. "The conservative wing of the Catholic community is in fact very small, though very vocal," he insouciantly observes. "The serious division is not within the community as a whole but between the people and the hierarchy"—except for figures in the hierarchy such as the late Joseph Bernardin of Chicago and the former John Quinn of San Francisco who, he notes approvingly, "listened sensitively."

The Intellectual Life

Fr. Reese is also concerned about what he takes to be the suppression of intellectual life by imposed conformity. "The Catholic Church spends a smaller percentage of its budget on research and development than any other multinational corporation in the world," he declares. It would not occur to many to think of the intellectual life as research and development, or of the Church as a multinational corporation, or of its mission as product marketing. But, then, Fr. Reese speaks as a social scientist. The future of what he simply calls "the reform" is, according to him, not encouraging

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in view of the corporation's present and prospective CEO. John Paul II has appointed almost all the voting cardinals, so Fr. Reese regretfully says that "the next pope may differ in style, but not in substance." Lest there be any doubt about his regretting this prospect, he adds, "We may even get a pope who will make his immediate predecessor look like a liberal." He does not say what it might mean for a pope to differ "in substance." In any event, we are told, the Church's intellectual product is not up to market standards. It has wasted its capital in fighting "a rearguard battle defending Scholasticism." "That battle has been lost, although you would never know it from reading the official Catechism of the Catholic Church." The Catechism clearly does not pass muster—speaking only from the viewpoint of social science and market research, mind you.

It finally comes down to a matter of management. "The Catholic Church, like IBM, was too big, with too many bureaucratic rules, to respond well to a changing environment." IBM blamed the personal computer and some Catholics blame the Second Vatican Council but "the problem [is] the inability of IBM and the Vatican to adapt their management styles to a new and rapidly changing environment." The Church, he says, "must be committed to the task of continuous critical renewal." In explaining what that means, he makes explicit the ecclesiology or theology of the Church that underlies his argument. "This is a dynamic process of deliberate self-constitution in which the church holds itself to its ideals and interacts with the world by responding to the needs of the times." Self-constitution. Perhaps that says it all. Constituted not by Christ or the Holy Spirit but by us. Accountable not to the revealed will of God but to our ideals and the needs of the times, presumably as those needs are defined by the world. This is the light in which we can understand Fr. Reese's opening question, "How do we change the church to make it ready for the next millennium?"

A Familiar Ecclesiology

It is a very odd way of putting the matter. The church (lower case) is our religious association to change as we will or, more precisely, to change in ways that will make it more attractive in the cultural marketplace. One might suggest that the question is how, as we prepare for the new millennium, do we discern and act upon the will of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit in more effectively communicating to the world its salvation in Christ? That is the way the question is addressed in John Paul's *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (As the Third Millennium Nears), which stands in sharpest contrast to Fr. Reese's reflection. Of course he would likely protest that the Pope is speaking theologically while he is speaking only as a social scientist. I would suggest, however, that what Fr. Reese proposes is also bad social science. I believe he seriously misreads the cultural circumstance to which he would have the Church accommodate herself. More important, good social science begins with the self-understanding of the phenomenon being studied. The Church understands herself not as a corporation in the religion business but as the Body of Christ and pilgrim People of God bearing the mystery of the world's salvation. It is not possible to separate so neatly the sociological and theological. Social science that does not begin with that self-understanding is bad social science and, to the extent it has influence in the Church, will produce bad theology.

"2001 and Beyond: Preparing the Church for the Next Millennium" brings to mind the motto of that hapless institution, the World Council of Churches: "The world sets the agenda for the church." Every change that Fr. Reese advocates as part of "the reform" has been undertaken, in spades, by the oldline Protestant denominations now in such disheartening decline. Married clergy, women clergy, theological pluralism, participatory governance, management studies galore—and all done in response to what Fr. Reese so touchingly calls "the inevitable movement of history." Of course he might say that the Protestant experience is not relevant because the Catholic Church is different. But it is precisely at the point of his ecclesiology—which is, disclaimers to the contrary, a theology of sorts—that the liberal Protestant parallel is most exact. They, too, believe that their churches are self-constituting communities accountable only to their own ideals, the market, and "the needs of the times."

Being editor of *America* is a position of considerable responsibility. I do not subscribe to the view that the magazine and the Society of Jesus that publishes it are on a course of unstoppable drift toward marginality. The Jesuits represent an enormous store of devotion, talent, and tradition that was, after the Council, largely invested in a version of "the reform" that was not to be. But the continuing power of the Ignatian charism is evident in the fact that more recent and more constructive reform movements admit, at least sotto voce, that their hope is to be "the new Jesuits." One can wish them well in that aspiration while, at the same time, not despairing of the possibility that the old Jesuits and their various enterprises such as *America* still have an invaluable contribution to make to the renewal for which the Council continues to call. Toward that end, one hopes that Fr. Reese's John Courtney Murray Lecture is not a preview of what may be expected from *America* in the years ahead.

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PROTOCOLS AND PERVERSITIES

Following protests by the Catholic League and others, the Manhattan Theater Club said it was withdrawing its plan to stage Terrence McNally's play *Corpus Christi*. A week later, after intense pressure from "the arts community," the theater reversed itself and announced it is going ahead with the production. The theater is partly financed by tax money. By the time this comment sees print the play may be up and running, or already closed.

Although I've tried to get a copy, I haven't seen the script of *Corpus Christi*. But both the London *Guardian* and the *New York Times* say they have seen it. According to the *Guardian*, the play opens with a woman screaming, "F--- me, f--- me!" again and again. Joseph somehow got his testicles shot off, which explains Mary's virginity. After Joshua (the Jesus figure) is unable to get an erection with his girlfriend, he discovers his gay "sexual identity" in a liaison with Judas Iscariot. Joshua proceeds to have sex with the other apostles, and it turns out that his magic "healing touch" is masturbation. At the Last Supper he says that the disciple who will betray him is someone who has "lain" with him, to which they all respond that that could be any of them. And so forth.

My apologies for bringing such swill to your attention, but there are questions of some interest engaged here. Once again the Catholic League is leading the protest, and once again the League and its allies are criticized by the usual suspects for trying to impose censorship. Also some Catholic voices say they are embarrassed by the League and its president, Dr. William Donohue, for allegedly ham-fisted protest that revives the outdated stereotype of immigrant Catholics as anti-intellectual and anti-artistic philistines. That criticism, too, is not new. More interesting is the argument that *Corpus Christi* can be viewed as an effort by homosexuals to "inculturate" the gospel. In the play, the Jesus-figure is crucified as "King of the Queers." While many, it is said, may think that an insult, in a play that champions being queer it should be taken as a gesture of approbation. What should one make of such an argument? Is it but a perverse twist upon perversity?

The public statement of the Catholic League is nothing if not straightforward: "The Manhattan Theatre Club has a legal right to offend Christians, but it has no moral right to do so. Hate speech is hate speech; it does not become something less if dressed in artistic clothing. Moreover, to flagrantly offend the sensibilities of any religious group is outrageous and can only fan the flames of bigotry. . . . We call upon the goodwill of all Americans to join with us in condemning this blasphemy."

Is the play an instance of "hate speech"? Is it "blasphemy"? Again, I have not seen the play, but the *Times* report gives some insight into the intention of the playwright. The script ends with the statement, "If we have offended, so be it. He belongs to us as well as you." It seems beyond reasonable doubt that Mr. McNally expects and intends to offend those Christians, which is almost all Christians, who are offended by the portrayal of Jesus as a sodomite. He intends to offend them, as the League puts it, "flagrantly." The most obvious reason one would want to do that, apart from earning plaudits from one's peers for being terribly brave, is that one hates those people, or at least hates their views regarding homosexuality and the gay subculture. So yes, the play is "hate speech." But is it "blasphemy"? One definition of blasphemy is "irreverence toward something considered sacred or inviolable." For those of us who consider the sinlessness, including sexual purity, of Jesus to be sacred and inviolable, the play is blasphemy. Another definition of blasphemy is "the act of insulting or showing contempt or lack of reverence for God." Mr. McNally would apparently claim that, far from being blasphemy, the play is an act of devotion to "The King of the Queers." As the play says, "He belongs to us as well as you." The play is, says the Manhattan Theatre Club, McNally's "own unique view of 'the greatest story ever told.'"

Were there a play of moral and spiritual seriousness attempting to "inculturate" Jesus and the gospel in the homosexual subculture, one's response might be quite different. One might criticize such a play as heretical and pathetically, even poignantly, wrongheaded. But, from everything we know, *Corpus Christi* is not such a play. It is a deliberate and hateful exercise in offending people who it is assumed, even hoped, will view it as blasphemy. The public protest against it is entirely warranted. The protocols of civility in our society are much battered, but one would like to think that enough decency remains to rule this exercise in calculated hate beyond the pale. Those Christian sophisticates manqué who are inclined to take outrages in stride and who claim that protest only draws attention to what is protested are, it is to be feared, quite blind to both the protocols and the decency that such protocols indispensably serve.

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A Matter of Simple Justice

"Win a few, lose a few." To which Charlie Brown of "Peanuts" fame responds, "That would be nice." Given the general state of the world, "Lose a few, lose a few" sometimes seems the safer motto. But we should remain open to surprises. Such as the June ruling of the Wisconsin Supreme Court in favor of school vouchers. The ruling is the more remarkable because the court found that Milwaukee's plan to help fifteen thousand poor children go to better schools not only passed muster with the state constitution but also with the religion clause of the federal constitution. Only a few years ago, parental choice in education was viewed as a very good idea whose time would come—someday. The best single article on the subject, to my mind, is still John Coons' "School Choice as Simple Justice" (FT, April 1992). With the Wisconsin decision, it seems that someday may be now.

Many people have prepared the way for this. Along with those who have done the hard thinking, writing, and persuading on the justice and practicability of this change, there were people such as Michael Joyce of the Bradley Foundation in Milwaukee who teamed up with organizers in poor communities, put programs into place, and fought for them against legal challenges from the government school defenders of the status quo. Similar movements have been launched around the country. There are now more than fifty private scholarship programs, and in Washington, D.C., almost eight thousand poor children applied for one thousand scholarships. Financier Ted Forstmann and others are raising more than $200 million for such scholarships nationwide. This is philanthropy that gives people money to help them help themselves, rather than, as with most of the big foundations, continuing to fund social engineers and pour vast resources into the sinkholes of their own designing.

The catastrophe of government schools for the urban poor is difficult to exaggerate. The *Wall Street Journal* reports: "Only 15 percent of Washington, D.C., children read 'below basic' on the Stanford 9 test in first grade. By 10th grade, 53 percent test below basic. In 10th-grade math, an incredible 89 percent score below basic. In other words, kids do worse the longer they're in schools that spend more than $9,000 a year per student." Many years ago I was on a university platform with the late Al Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, and I said that in New York City only one out of five children entering first grade would end up with an employment-relevant high school diploma. Afterwards he told me privately that he thought it was more like one out of ten. Shanker knew that the status quo could not be sustained, although he was not sure what to do about it. The teachers union leadership of today appears to be in terminal denial.

Ten years ago, parental choice was understood to be a "conservative" idea. Now it is being embraced also by liberal thinkers and politicians. Not by President Clinton, however, and not by Vice President Al Gore, who has been aptly described as a wholly-owned subsidiary of the National Education Association. And certainly not by the *New York Times*, whose reaction to the Wisconsin decision was a lead editorial titled "Breaching the Church-State Wall." The language and logic of the reaction betray the pathetic bankruptcy of education's ancien régime. The editors have apparently not been told that the jurisprudence of the Supreme Court has in recent years abandoned Jefferson's "wall of separation" as the controlling paradigm for understanding the religion clause of the First Amendment. The new concept is "equal regard," and it requires that government not discriminate against institutions or programs simply because they are religious. There is solid reason to hope that the Court will uphold the Wisconsin decision.

The editors write that "this veneer of choice does not change the fact that taxpayer dollars would flow into sectarian institutions in contravention of the First Amendment prohibition against the establishment of religion. Many church schools that would be tax-funded have religious indoctrination as a core purpose." Let's hope that they do. As for what the editors call tax-funded religion, it struck me many years ago that St. John the Evangelist, my parish in a black and poor section of Brooklyn, was almost entirely funded by the government. Vestments, bread, wine, and hymnals were purchased, the heat bill and salaries were paid, by the contributions of people whose chief income was the government welfare system. There is no difference in principle between government giving people money to purchase food and clothing or giving them money to purchase educational opportunity for their children. If the *Times* had its way, maybe people on welfare could buy food and clothing only in government stores. The editorial reaction reflects two fears: the fear of poor people having the freedom to decide what is best for them and theirs, and the fear of religion.

The Wisconsin decision, the editors continue, "fails to foresee the patronage bonanza that would result among politicians competing to funnel tax revenues to the institutions favored by their constituents, whether they be urban Catholics in Northern cities or suburban Protestants in the Sun Belt." Politicians would try to please their constituents? Horrors! Or maybe it is only horrible when the constituents are Northern Catholics or

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Southern Protestants. Instead, it is suggested, politicians should continue to funnel tax revenues only into the government school system that is run by the constituents of the *New York Times*.

The editors are not finished. "Parents will essentially be left to choose between a state-supported private education system and the old public school system. As more families opt out of the public schools, those schools will starve." The *Times* apparently has no confidence that the government schools can successfully compete by reforming themselves; therefore the children of poor people must be forced to go to them. The editorial ends on the low note of hypocrisy that has become standard in this debate, with a ringing affirmation of "the common schools that are essential institutions for a democratic society." And how many editors at the *Times*, do you suppose, send their children to public schools in New York City? In all fairness, there may be one or two, for the city has wisely maintained a few elite enclaves within the system. But you can bet the family fortune that nobody at the *Times*, nor anyone else who can afford an alternative, sends their children to the schools to which the editors would forcibly consign the children of the poor. What is true of New York is true of other urban areas in America. As Jack Coons said, school choice is a matter of simple justice. Its time has come.

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WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ Among academic apostles of what is now the Old Left, Michael Walzer of Princeton is widely viewed as the prince. Taking his turn in the section of *The New Republic* that is called "The Hard Questions," he bemoans what he believes to be the growing economic inequality in America, which is a country "far more unequal than a democracy can afford to be." In the state of New York disparity between the wealthiest fifth and the poorest fifth is twenty to one, and in the District of Columbia it is thirty to one. "Are we our brothers' keepers?" asks Walzer. In answer to that question, Walzer writes, "The success of the ideological campaign against the welfare state" answers that "inequality is the way of the world, and dole and dependency only make it worse." He laments that people no longer care about inequality. What is to be done? "And so there really isn't any alternative—certainly not for writers and magazine editors—except the strategy of surprise: we need still more well-publicized studies, not of income distribution itself in which, it appears, no one is interested, but of its 'human interest' effects: on infant mortality, quality of education, career opportunities, housing, the impact of particular diseases, the experience of old age, and so on. Let the 'surprises' mount, until, one day, there is a shock of recognition—and then there may be new possibilities for political mobilization." Ah yes, give me that old time religion. Mobilization. One day. Come the revolution, or at least a return to the good old days of wealth redistribution. But of course all such thinking is driven less by concern for the poor than by an ideological fixation on equality. None of the social ills to which Walzer alludes are "effects" of inequality. They are in part the effect of being very poor, but the very poor are not very poor because others are very rich. The great moral challenge is to help the poor enter "the circle of productivity and exchange" (*Centesimus Annus*) whereby they may become, if not very rich, at least nonpoor. Political mobilization around inequality is in fact the political mobilization of the vice of envy. Among the lessons of the bloody century now drawing to a close is that such mobilizations inevitably end up in tyranny. It is a great pity that a thinker of the stature of Michael Walzer has not learned that.

■ Francis Cardinal Arinze, a Nigerian, is president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. He is a most engaging and articulate man and is often mentioned as *papabile*, meaning a likely candidate for Pope when—God willing, years from now—there is an opening. When in Rome recently I mentioned this to a cardinal, he responded, "Do you think the Church is ready for an African Pope?" Twenty years ago there were no doubt those who asked, "Do you think the Church is ready for a Polish Pope?" The answer is no, but we're trying hard to catch up with him. I mention Arinze because he was lecturing at Catholic University in Washington a while back on interreligious dialogue and he suggested that theologians must resist two temptations in that enterprise. One is the pride that refuses to recognize what is good and true in other religions. The other is "reparation theology." Reparation theologians are so defensive about the real or alleged sins of Christian missionaries that they develop a "tendency to glamorize [other] religions, to set their best ideals against the worst or weakest type of behavior among Christians, to denigrate Christianity, and to speak only of its presumed defects." Reparation theology. It is a valuable addition to our vocabulary.

■ A long time ago I mentioned here my dog Sammy, in connection with a comment on Luther's observation that he wished that, just once, he could pray as attentively as his dog looks at a piece of meat. Some readers still ask about Sammy, who went the way of all dogs back in 1990. She has been replaced by Sammy II, a mostly boxer creature who is as dumb as she is devoted (there is, the jaded might say,

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a connection between the two). This is brought to mind by another inquiry about Sammy, and by a comment of Father Patrick Henry Reardon in *Touchstone*. He thinks the book of Tobit must be inspired because it is the only place in the Bible where a dog is mentioned favorably. Recall that Tobias sets off on his long journey with the company of two companions, an angel and a dog. St. Jerome's translation of the Vulgate took liberties. In the original languages there is no reference to the dog's tail but, according to Jerome, when Tobias finally came home "the dog wagged his tail." Jerome, who is usually pictured with a lion but may also have kept dogs, was obviously familiar with Homer's homecoming in the *Odyssey*. In any event, when I told this to Sammy II, she wagged her tail.

■ You may not have heard of the "per se" argument, but it is discussed in a most enlightening manner in a new quarterly publication, *Propositions*, put out by the Institute for American Values, which is headed by the formidable David Blankenhorn. The institute sponsors a twenty-member Council on Families, a group of scholars who have had an impressive influence in reshaping public debates about family, marriage, children, and divorce. Worried about that influence, another group of academics and writers has put together a Council on Contemporary Families in order to counter it. Here is where the "per se" argument comes in, according to *Propositions*: "Another strategy is the 'per se' argument. Whatever you want to denigrate or downplay—marriage, fatherhood, the two-parent home—simply describe it as not very important 'per se.' Here is contemporary-council member Carolyn P. Cowan describing the new council's conceptual framework: 'It's not the family structure per se, it's the quality of the relationships between adults and children.' This formulation works for almost any topic. It's not marriage per se, it's commitment in relationships. It's not fatherhood per se, it's another caring adult to help raise the child. Or this slight variation: The problem for children is not divorce per se, it's parental conflict. The purpose of the 'per se' argument is always disassembly: to break something down into its constituent parts, so that the effects of one part can be said to override the effects of another. Consider this example: Regarding who gets lung cancer, what matters is not 'smoking per se,' but lifestyle habits. The statement is obviously absurd. One cannot logically separate smoking from lifestyle, much less suggest that the health consequences of lifestyle somehow invalidate the health consequences of smoking. Similarly, it is absurd for Carolyn Cowan to suggest that good relationships matter, but that who lives in the home ('family structure per se') does not, as if we must choose between the two, oblivious to the fact that they are inextricably connected. If a father is separated from the mother and living far away, doesn't that typically impinge on the 'quality' of the father-child relationship? One more example: the common claim that the main problem for children is not 'father-absence per se,' but rather the effects of living in poverty. See how it works? Like a magic wand, this formulation turns any evidence that poverty harms children into evidence that father-absence does not harm children, or at least does not harm children as much as poverty does. What gets lost in the sophistry is that fatherlessness and child poverty are not opposed to one another; they are causally linked. Which helps to explain why children in mother-only homes are five times more likely to be poor than the children in married-couple homes, and why approximately 60 percent of all poor children in the U.S. today live in homes characterized by 'father-absence per se.'" (*Propositions* is available from the Institute for American Values, 1841 Broadway, Suite 211, New York, NY 10023.)

■ Writing in *Crisis*, the redoubtable Hadley Arkes describes a priest friend of his who, he says, thinks Governor George W. Bush of Texas is "the new Pro-Life Hope." Arkes describes this unnamed priest friend as an exceedingly likable and influential person but, despite that, everybody who has read the article thinks he is talking about me. If that is the case, my friend Hadley Arkes misunderstands my position. It is true that I have talked with Governor Bush, and it is true we have discussed the life issues in considerable detail, and it is true that he strongly declares that he is pro-life and is committed to the goal of every unborn child protected in law and welcomed in life, and, finally, it is true that I find him a very sympathetic person. But I wholeheartedly agree with Arkes that politicians should be viewed with robust skepticism and held to the standard of matching private assurances with public actions. I have not said and do not believe that Governor Bush is "the new Pro-Life Hope." I do believe he should be encouraged to demonstrate that he might be such a promising leader. The same should be said of other possible candidates, such as Steve Forbes and John Ashbrook, with whom I have also had the opportunity to discuss these matters. So there is no disagreement between Mr. Arkes and myself. Moreover, in view of the flattering things he writes about this friend of his, I expect he has some other priest in mind.

■ There is something of a Catholic revival in, of all places, the Netherlands. People are still leaving the Church, but there is also a wave of converts, frequently prominent intellectuals, who are known as the "new Catholics." Reporting on these developments, *Religion Watch* says: "The number of permanent deacons has grown from one million in 1978 to six million today." So it seems the Dutch

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have solved the problem of anticlericalism by making everyone a cleric.

■ "Theoretical pantheism is practical metheism," observes our J. Budziszewski in his review of Neale Donald Walsch's two volumes of *Conversations with God,* which have been on the best-seller lists for what seems like ages. Budziszewski provides a useful guide to understanding the argument, so to speak, at the foundation of Mr. Walsch's New Age industry: "Is the book difficult? No, it is all very 'logical,' as the conversations of people in an asylum often are. Here is how the argument works: 1) God is the greatest entity imaginable. 2) So God is All Things. 3) Naturally, All Things has no consciousness of its own. 4) So God can experience itself as God only through parts of itself that do have consciousness. 5) That's you and me. 6) But All Things is all there is. 7) So there's really only one thing. 8) So we drop the distinction between the All and its parts. 9) So we're not just parts of God—we're God. 10) But there is only one of us. 11) So God is Me." As the great GKC said, the problem with the mad man is not that he is not logical; the problem is he is only logical.

■ That it appears in the Jesuit weekly *America* gives it additional interest. "A View of Religious Vocations" by Father Albert DiIanni of the Marist Fathers reports on the burgeoning growth of religious orders that have returned to a more classic view of the consecrated life. The standard liberal response to this phenomenon, he writes, is to say that these are arch-conservative young people who want to repeal the Second Vatican Council. Not so, says Fr. DiIanni. These are people who really dig into the documents of the Council to release the renewal that it calls for, rather than the revolution that some tried to make in its name. "Most of all," he writes, "we must not project our own needs on the young. Many of us born before 1950 were perhaps repressed and starved for freedom. But today's young people are not repressed. They may in fact be 'hyper-expressed.' They have tried everything and found it wanting. Brought up in a deconstructionist world without meaning or purpose, a world insistent on freedom and tolerance as the highest values, they experience vertigo. They are looking for lines, for a place to stand. If they have a need for security, it is not a neurotic need but a legitimate one, like the need of the elderly for social security. Is it neurotic to seek for answers in a world in which choice is king? Is it neurotic to seek meaning in a cultural climate in which intellectuals speak of human life as a sport of nature without meaning or purpose?" As in the early Church, DiIanni writes, there is a necessary critical edge in a religious commitment that is not embarrassed to be "different." What has happened in our culture in recent decades has also had an impact on religious communities. "Has not a similar secularization taken place in religious life during the past thirty-five years? And is it not now generating a similar revival? Many members of the young X-Generation seem to be in search of the classical in the midst of the novel. They desire not a return to the past but a recapturing of the perennial. They want the Catholicism that was taught down the ages and not one whose ultimate criterion of validity is the lived experience of the last thirty years. They are as much in love with Jesus adoring the Father as they are with Jesus walking among the poor, and for this reason they desire contemplation as well as action. Does not this change in the young demand a different response from our various religious congregations? Can we disregard what they consider very important and very valid needs? Are these not new signs of the times? As we come to the birth of a new century and a new millennium, perhaps the authentic renewal of religious life will be found in the visions and dreams of the young. Perhaps, once again, a child will lead us."

■ The-lordship-of-Christ-over-everything-short-of-downright-evil is the jargon of a school of thought called neo-Calvinism, says another school of thought called paleo-Calvinism. The latter school is represented by *Nicotine Theological Journal.* (Nicotine, pronounced NiCOtin, is the name of St. Augustine's younger brother, it says here.) *NTJ,* which supports impossibly unrespectable old school Presbyterianism, thinks the neo-Calvinists are deluding themselves with all this talk about Christ's lordship over a world that is clearly in rebellion against God. And a marvelously convenient delusion it is. "Neo-Calvinism is a very reassuring outlook, though, for North American Protestants living in the suburbs, buying a half-gallon of milk at 11:00 P.M. from a convenience store on the way home from a session meeting, shopping for Christmas by phone from L. L. Bean and Williams-Sonoma catalog sales staff, surfing the internet to see which airline has the lowest fares to Florida in January, and employed by companies whose headquarters are thousands of miles away. In this setting, it is very consoling to hear that the world, as much as it is run by large, impersonal bureaucracies, really belongs to God. Putting one's head down on the pillow at night with the knowledge that all truth is God's truth sure makes the Domino's pizza consumed in front of an ESPN late-night broadcast of a Fresno State-versus-BYU women's gymnastic match settle better in the tummy." Offering a turn on Richard Weaver's famed phrase, *NTJ* thinks the-lordship-of-Christ-over-everything is, if it doesn't challenge what is radically wrong with our world as it is, "an idea without consequence." "In other words, after clearing away the smoke and breaking the mirrors that advocates of progress constantly peddle, the neo-Calvinist project of taking everything captive for Christ

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appears almost as naive as it has been unsuccessful. At the very least, we need to admit that a Christian worldview is a contested entity that has been used too much to bless the urban-industrial order. A worldview that promotes caution about if not retreat from the developments of urban-industrialism, though often ridiculed as fundamentalist, Luddite, or even worse, Amish, may be equally Christian and worthy to bear the name." As to Augustine's younger brother, I gather that's just a way to sneak the journal past censorious church librarians who may suspect it has something to do with smoking.

■ I confess that when I took on Daniel Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* in these pages (August/September 1996) I felt just a little trepidation, so much was the book being ballyhooed as a great breakthrough in understanding Nazism and the Holocaust. Since then it seems that those who were beating the drums for Goldhagen's simplistic slander have retreated in embarrassed silence, or at least the public discussion of these questions has regained a measure of sanity. Among the evidences of that happy change is Peter Fritzsche's new book from Harvard University Press, *Germans Into Nazis* (263 pp., $24.95). Fritzsche, an historian at the University of Illinois, agrees that ordinary Germans were ideologically driven. Not by an exuberance for exterminating Jews, however, but by a yearning for a national renascence, which is what they believed the Nazis were promising. He writes: "Better than any other party, the Nazis were able to insert the desire for social reform into a national frame, and the more frantic their outbursts the more resolute and uncompromised they appeared. Young people, housewives, and even industrial workers perceived the Nazis to be on the side of 'social justice'—these exact words appear again and again in oral histories and contemporary interviews. The Nazi message was brutal, and to many observers it appeared self-serving and propagandistic; nonetheless, it has to be remembered that thousands of Germans were drawn to the movement out of idealism and enthusiastically responded to the task of renovating the nation. As for the Social Democrats, they failed to respond with positive demands of their own. Over and over, 'their Marxism deterred them from tinkering with capitalism,' and yet their rigorous rationalism kept them from elaborating their indisputably humane social values into a more compelling utopian vision. As a result, at least half a million German workers, including many old Social Democrats, voted for the Nazi party by the end of 1932." *Germans Into Nazis* is a small book and one wishes for a more adequate treatment of, among other things, the role of the churches, but its great achievement is to remind us that ordinary people, not just ordinary Germans, can be party to the doing of terrible things for what they believe to be good, even admirable, reasons. In that reminder is the hope of maintaining the universal pertinence of Nazism and the Holocaust.

■ Since the early 1980s, Canada has this Charter of Rights and Freedoms which serves, mutatis mutandis, much as the Constitution does in U.S. law, with the additional difficulty that it is the creation of the very lawyers who have the responsibility of interpreting it. This invites an even more flagrant "judicial usurpation of politics," as is evident in the flat assertion of Canadian courts that "Charter values" trump both social tradition and the express will of the majority of the people. These questions are addressed by a Canadian lawyer, Iain Benson, senior research fellow at the Centre for Renewal in Public Policy in British Columbia, in a paper on the idea of the person and current theories of rights. Among other things, Benson notes: "Jurisprudence is a long way behind theology in its understanding of the person: how sadly ironic, therefore, that it is a regnant judiciary that has the task of giving practical application to ontology in our time. If philosophy is the handmaiden of theology, then jurisprudence today is but the scullerymaid of philosophy in the guise of the Monarch."

■ The "two nations" trope goes back to Disraeli, who said a century ago that, despite the great wealth of the era, there are "two nations, between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy; who are as ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts, and feelings, as if they were dwellers in different zones, or inhabitants of different planets." The noted social scientist James Q. Wilson chose "Two Nations" as the title of his Francis Boyer Lecture at the American Enterprise Institute, in which he argued in his usual persuasive manner that, with respect to the urban underclass, "We have tried almost everything except for the one thing that matters most—rebuilding the family. However difficult, it is what there is left to try." He also argued that rebuilding the family cannot be done without something like a religious revival. "Religion shapes lives in every culture that has ever existed, and does so more powerfully than the mass media or government programs. Throughout the Western world, political and intellectual elites have abandoned interest in, or acquired a deep hostility to, the force that has given meaning to Western life. To a degree, this was understandable. The Enlightenment, of which we all are part, was created by thinkers who wished to end religious warfare and sectarian authority. But we have done more than end religious warfare; we have tried hard to end religion itself, thereby subjecting much of mankind to a new form of warfare—the hopeless struggle of lonely souls against impulses they can neither understand nor control." Some folks, he suggests, can maybe get

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along without religion, but not others. "We live today with the advantages of three centuries of political and intellectual emancipation, but those advantages were purchased at a price. Most of us do not feel that price because we have transformed the teachings of the Enlightenment into personal wealth, political power, social advantage, or intellectual accomplishment. Those who have done so are part of one nation, proud of what freedom has allowed us to achieve. But there is a second nation, growing more rapidly than the first. It is the nation that has paid heavily the high price of freedom. It is armed to the teeth, excited by drugs, preoccupied with respect, and indifferent to the future. Its children crowd our schools and fill our streets, armed and dangerous." I'm sure it's not what Wilson intended, but that can be interpreted in ways that come uncomfortably close to the Gibbon-like proposition that religion is a noble lie that is needed to control the great unwashed. Our discomfort with anything tainted by that proposition notwithstanding, from a purely sociological viewpoint Wilson is undoubtedly right.

■ *World*, the evangelical weekly, takes on World Relief, the relief agency of the National Association of Evangelicals, for playing patsy with the U.S. government's population control crusade. More than 60 percent of the agency's overseas funding comes from Washington, and it is very much part of the Clinton Administration's policy of supporting the coercive sterilization of hundreds of thousands of women in Latin America and elsewhere, says *World*. The head of World Relief, Clive Carver, is quoted as saying that he is "rigidly pro-life." He adds, "My understanding is that we do not follow the Roman Catholic position. The use of non-abortive contraceptives is acceptable; and we can encourage birth controls that are non-abortive. I would want World Relief to be absolutely and emphatically square with the teaching of Scripture, which is absolutely unambivalent on this. . . . We will not take the line of compromise. I don't mind if it costs money in terms of funding."

■ Compassion is in order for bishops who would demonstrate compassion in circumstances of moral ambiguity. Bishop John R. McGann of the diocese of Rockville Centre recently held in his cathedral a service of prayer and anointing for those with HIV-AIDS. Certainly the Church has no choice but to extend its ministry to all. But then things get tricky. As with the bishops conference's unfortunate statement on homosexuality, "All Our Children," the calls for "concern" and "understanding" are routinely turned into grist for the mills of advocacy. The *Long Island Catholic* reports the views of Ursuline Sister Pascal Conforti, who cares for people with AIDS and offered her reflections at the service. Jesus, she said, was also criticized for "expressing what might seem to be immoderate love for a friend." And then this: "At some level, Jesus in his passion let himself become unprotected for our sake—immune deficient if you will. Somehow he allowed himself to become subject to the destructive forces in the society around him." At the most obvious level, a suggested comparison between the ministry of Jesus and the act of sodomy is blasphemous. That is surely not what Sister Pascal intended, and she is right about Our Lord reaching out to the marginal and submitting himself to the forces of destruction. But her locution reflects the curious ways in which, in some circles, AIDS has been sacralized, with its innocent "victims" depicted as Christ-figures bearing the sins of a homophobic society. They are no longer, like all of us, sinners in need of redemption but have themselves become the agents of redemption. Jesus—who "let himself become unprotected for our sake"—is the ultimate AIDS victim. Such perverse manipulation of Christian symbols is no longer a surprise in the general media, but it does seem noteworthy when it appears on the front page of the *Long Island Catholic*.

■ "On January 6, as Pope Paul VI returned [from the Middle East] to Rome and Malcolm X submitted to summary court in Phoenix, Martin Luther King took a reserved seat at the U.S. Supreme Court for oral argument in the *Sullivan* case." That is a typical entry in *Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years 1963-65* by Taylor Branch (Simon and Schuster). The first volume was *Parting the Waters*, covering the years 1954-63, and the third will be *At Canaan's Edge*, taking the story up through Dr. King's death in 1968. Having been a minor participant in the story, I suppose I've read almost all the books dealing with the civil rights movement under Dr. King. I was quite taken with *Parting the Waters*, and therefore puzzled at first by my disappointment with *Pillar of Fire*. The problem, I have come to think, is reflected in sentences such as that cited above. Mr. Branch purports to be writing a history of America, and indeed of the world, during "the King years." The result is a hodgepodge of the most disparate events chronologically coincident with what is taken to be the paradigmatic event of Dr. King and his movement. The impact of the man and the movement was enormous, but when everything is refracted through it one ends up with a distortion of the history of the time and a distraction from the story Branch most wants to tell. Perhaps he thought the story itself is by now too familiar to hold the reader's interest for 750 pages, and, apart from us aficionados, he may be right. His is an admiring telling of the story and that's fair enough by me. He does touch on but does not explore the squalor of Dr. King's sexual life, and he is very hard on what he depicts as the general buffoonery and egotism of

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King's closest friend, Ralph Abernathy. Too hard, I think. Those were crazy times that encouraged people to do crazy things, and there was no doubt a lot of general nuttiness in the King entourage. The most revealing account of King and the movement he led is still *And the Walls Came Tumbling Down* by Ralph Abernathy.

■ Worthwhile launches should get a plug with their premiere issue, and *Canticle* seems very worthwhile indeed. Subtitled "The Voice of Today's Catholic Woman," this new quarterly is a handsome production and, far more important, is apparently determined to make the most of the richness of Christian teaching about the dignity of women, human sexuality, and the blessed agony of rearing children in the faith. Genevieve Kineke, editor. $15.95 per year, New Hope, KY, 40052.

■ Elliott Abrams of the Ethics and Public Policy Center, along with a number of other Jewish figures, sharply criticized as anti-Christian a film shown at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, and that has occasioned some healthy discussion. Along with excited reactions by Leon Wieseltier of *The New Republic* and a few others who seem to be arguing that, in the shadow of the Holocaust, Jews are beyond criticism, at least in their relationship to Christians and Christianity. A prominent Jewish thinker who for the moment wishes to remain anonymous because of his role in this dispute has given me permission to quote his reflections in a private letter: "I think that a good deal of this new Jewish anti-Christianity is based on two factors. (1) The Church is really the only institution left, and the only one we have any political contact with, which could still be connected to the Holocaust somehow. As more and more of both the survivors and the perpetrators of the Holocaust are no longer in this world, the victimology perpetuated by those who would put the Holocaust at the center of Jewish identity requires someone to blame. How convenient of Christianity to have survived! (2) Anti-Christianity deflects many liberals from facing the fact that the eugenics movement, especially the American eugenics movement, was a far more direct influence on Nazi ideology than was Christianity. Why won't they face that fact? It is because eugenics ideology is at the heart of their support of abortion and euthanasia: only some lives are worthy of life. And their anti-Christianity is more than just deflective, it is also a covert way of attacking traditional Christian morality. But, as such, it is really anti-Jewish because that morality is 99 percent Jewish. This is how I see it and I think this is the next argument we should propose in the debate. The debate must continue because the great strides made in Jewish-Christian relations—spiritually, politically, morally, and intellectually—must not be jeopardized by Leon Wieseltier et alia."

■ Alan Wolfe, sociologist at Boston University, takes Stephen Carter to task for offering little more than an exhortation in his new book, *Civility*. He strongly agrees that we should try to be nice to one another, but he doubts whether that is an argument. He notes that Carter was a Boy Scout and comes across as a splendid fellow (which I can attest he is). Wolfe adds, however: "When I search for people with whom I can make friends, I look for people like him. But when I vote for politicians, serve on a search committee, or look for political wisdom, I search out people who are realists. We need sermons as much as we need statesmen. Mr. Carter has not fully grasped how little one has to do with the other." In sum, sermons have little to do with the real world. That may be true of most sermons, but it is very dubious as a principle.

■ Victor Davis Hanson had this nice little op-ed reflection on how Thucydides, were he alive today, would urge us to recognize "the tragic nature of our existence" rather than turning to the illusory promises of psychotherapy. This prompted Susan Bers, assistant professor of psychiatry, and Victor Bers, professor of classics, both at Yale, to write a stiff letter to the editor of the *Times*: "Thucydides' discussion of the horrific plague that afflicted Athens indicated that he wrote in the hope that research would bring better diagnosis and treatment of the disease." Ah, so that's what Thucydides was getting at. What I hope was Mr. Bers' embarrassment in signing the letter was, perhaps, a small price to pay for keeping peace in the Bers household.

■ I think I understand what they're trying to do (aside from trying to sell books), but I am made uneasy by a new series from Hendrickson Publishers: *The Bible Made Easy, Bible Prophecy Made Easy, Bible Study Made Easy*. Presumably Bible study is part of the Christian life. It's not supposed to be easy. It's supposed to be hard. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer said in *The Cost of Discipleship*, when God calls a man he calls him to come and die. I do hope there is not a book in the works titled *Discipleship Made Easy*.

■ Maintaining a modicum of independence from government is on my list of Important Things, and I'm therefore uneasy about lawsuits that claim Yale is a public institution and subject to a bundle of anti-discrimination regulations. At the same time, Yale seems particularly obtuse in refusing to accommodate a handful of Orthodox Jews who want an exemption from its unisex housing rules. Rabbi Jacob Neusner writes: "Cripples have their ramps; gays and lesbians, their K-Y dispensers and their double beds; blacks, their own graduation ceremonies; Hispanics, their own unions; voyeurs, their unisex toilets—all courtesy of university

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administrators. But rather than extend the same 'sensitivity' to scarcely a *minyan*—a quorum—of Orthodox Jews, Yale would rather humiliate itself publicly and announce, 'You're not welcome here.'" In its concern to maintain a "common university experience," Yale may feel the necessity to draw the line somewhere. But why here?

■ A distraught reader of liberal disposition brings to my attention that the *New Oxford Review* publishes a talk given to priests by Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz of Lincoln, Nebraska, in which he is discussing the deference that is owed the office of Peter: "Certainly the Catholic priesthood has no room for sycophancy and flattery. Honesty and correctness both to and about our superiors is important. But we must remind ourselves that our obedience to the Pope must be given in imitation of Christ Himself, who obeyed." The bishop is, of course, not saying that Christ obeyed the Pope nor that we can or should obey the Pope in the same way as the Son obeyed the Father. He no doubt means, quite simply, that obedience is a virtue which is also exemplified by Christ and should be exercised in relationship to ecclesial superiors. Sometimes it really helps to have an editor.

■ I thought they had gone about as far as they can go in Kansas City when Hallmark came out with a line of cards for suicides. But now they're pushing a Holocaust series, marketed under the name of "Tree of Life" and featuring paintings done by an eight-year-old Jewish girl in 1943 when she was hiding from the Nazis in Poland. The publicity says this is "Hallmark's brand of greeting cards for Jewish consumers," but later adds that it "appeals to people of all religions, races, and ethnicities." Sure, why not? One card is a picture of a young girl feeding ducks on a bright, sunny day. Inside, Hallmark prints the sentiment: "Wishing you a day of simple peace and beauty, a day that's sun-blessed with joy." The Holocaust as icon of absolute evil? Nonsense. Have a nice day.

■ "The strength of their souls flutters inside your heart like a caged bird's wings," writes Helen Schulman, describing her three miscarriages. This is in an anthology, *Wanting A Child*, Schulman, a novelist, edited with poet and editor Jill Bialosky (Farrar, Straus & Giroux). Bialosky mourns a son who died after three days and a daughter who was born dead. "Imagine learning your baby was no longer safe in your womb," she writes. The twenty-two personal essays includes one by Michael Bérubé, father of a Down syndrome child, who describes parenthood as "this overwhelming, bone-crushing, life-transforming, complicated feeling of wonder." Yes, imagine knowing your baby is no longer safe in your womb. In this country alone, more than a million women each year do not have to imagine it. They have decided it. *Wanting a Child* is, to put it mildly, decidedly pro-natal, and it is good to see it praised in the general media. Yet one cannot help but marvel at the queer disjunction in the minds of those who are awed by the mystery of life that is wanted while, at the same time, they are indifferent to the wholesale slaughter of lives that are not. The reality, I fear, is that they are less in awe of life than of their own wanting.

■ Innumerable mothers who work outside the home feel guilty about not being with their children. Now Susan Chira has written a book that answers their problem, *A Mother's Place: Taking the Debate About Working Mothers Beyond Guilt and Blame* (HarperCollins). Her answer to mothers who feel guilty: Don't. The *Times* put it out for review to Marily Nissenson, who has written a book giving the same helpful advice. "Studies indicate," writes Nissenson, "that mothers who work outside the home take great satisfaction in their jobs. Work provides income, and it is important that children understand that." Who would have thought that there are studies indicating that (some) mothers who work outside the home take great satisfaction in their jobs? Not to mention that work provides income. It appears that women actually get paid for these jobs: Okay, kids, so you don't see Mommy very often, but we need the money, and it's important you understand that. Nissenson continues: "Women who choose the so-called 'mommy track' may find out too late that such a decision has led to permanent career compromise and, for many, a kind of second-class citizenship within their marriages. Because they earn less than their husbands, they have less leverage in the relationship." Marriage is a power thing; you wouldn't understand. The authors have stumbled across other studies that suggest a general principle: "Children seem to thrive most when their mothers are where they want to be." Memo to five-year-old Susan: So what if you haven't seen your mother for years. She is where she wants to be, which is not with you. Stop whining and thrive, kid.

■ In denying pleas for clemency in sentencing pro-life heroine Joan Andrews Bell to jail, Judge Raymond Novak declared, "You are following the law of God, and I am sworn to uphold the law of man." Since the judge has raised the question of sworn duties, it is perhaps appropriate to note that he is a former Jesuit priest. As a carefully instructed adult he freely took vows of lifelong fidelity to the Society of Jesus and the priesthood. While the duties attending the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas are not unimportant, Judge Novak might be well advised to exercise a measure of reticence in opining about solemn obligations.

■ Playing pundit ping-pong with Monsignor George Higgins is a mildly amusing distraction,

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although chiefly, I suspect, to the players. His column, syndicated in Catholic papers, relentlessly criticizes those awful neoconservatives for, among other things, their allegedly uncritical endorsement of capitalism. I responded to his last salvo, saying it ain't so, but adding that I nearly despair of changing his mind on this issue. In a later column, the Monsignor comes back with, "I assume, then, that he despairs of changing the minds of other more important writers on the topic." I assume it is an indication of his understanding of important writers that he cites an Episcopal priest, Gary Dorrien, and a Jesuit, John Langan, both of whom share his view of the neoconservatives. Higgins continues, "While I despair of convincing Father Neuhaus on the point Father Dorrien and Father Langan make, I promise him I will say no more about it in this column for the indefinite future." Promise noted. He adds, "However, I will have much more to say about my major complaint against the neoconservatives: they have been deafeningly silent on labor issues." He then refers to what he calls a "terrible" book on that subject published by the American Enterprise Institute and says, "To my knowledge, no neoconservative journal (and I read them all religiously) has said a word in criticism of this book. I can only wonder why." My goodness, I didn't know there were that many neoconservative journals. This journal has neither praised nor criticized the book because, to the best of my knowledge, nobody around here has seen it, and such an item would not be high on the list of the hundreds of books demanding review attention. As to my own "deafening silence" on labor, however, Msgr. Higgins has apparently forgotten his criticism of what I have published on that subject. In a nutshell, my view is that Msgr. Higgins' argument is with American workers, not with what is written by intellectuals, neocon or other. As many liberal writers have also noted, organized labor has largely lost the confidence of American workers. A small and declining minority belong to unions, and then only because closed union shops give them no choice. The only significant growth area for unions is among government employees, which gives organized labor a big stake in expanding big government, which has also lost the confidence of most Americans. (Ten percent of workers in the independent sector and 14 percent in government employment belong to unions.) Msgr. Higgins is the last in a long and honorable line of what used to be called "labor priests," and I understand his loyalties. Therefore I will not make it a "major complaint" that he has been deafeningly silent about various corruptions in the labor movement, including the much-discussed abuse by which union leaders siphon many millions of dollars from membership dues into political purposes with which many, if not most, members disagree. To my knowledge, Msgr. Higgins (and I read him not religiously but regularly) has said not a word in criticism of this practice. I would be less than candid if I said that I can only wonder why.

■ In his regular column in *Time* magazine, Charles Krauthammer reflects on the frequency with which public expressions of religious faith draw the suspicion of fanaticism. The *New York Times*, for instance, notes that Whitewater prosecutor Hickman Ewing wrote an article for a law review on combating official corruption and began it with a quote from the Old Testament. Krauthammer writes: "The Horror! By that standard Martin Luther King was not just a fanatic but a raving zealot (And what shall we do with the first line of *Moby-Dick*?). . . . We've come a long way in America. After two centuries, it seems we finally do have a religious test for office. True religiosity is disqualifying. Well, not quite. Believers may serve—but only if they check their belief at the office door. At a time when religion is a preference and piety a form of eccentricity suggesting fanaticism, Chesterton needs revision: tolerance is not just the virtue *of* people who do not believe in anything; tolerance extends only *to* people who don't believe in anything. Believe in something, and beware. You may not warrant presidential-level attack, but you'll make yourself suspect should you dare enter the naked public square."

■ The Catholic Theological Society of America has been strongly criticized for its increasingly dissident ways. The newly elected president, Father Robert Schreiter of the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, has taken the criticism to heart. He announced at this year's annual meeting in Ottawa, "I want to ensure that there is a platform within the CTSA for all the different theological approaches that can be taken." It is good to know there is a place for theologians who assent to the Church's teaching, but a platform for *all* the approaches that can be taken? Presumably they'll have to get a bigger meeting room.

■ Recognizing the truth that others know without compromising the truth that we know is a permanent problem, not least of all for Christians. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, addressed the problem at a Paris conference on interreligious dialogue. (The reference at the end is to Nicholas of Cusa's *De pace fidei*, in which he imagines Christ convening a heavenly council to resolve religious conflicts.) Cardinal Ratzinger said: "Does this mean that missionary activity must cease and be replaced by dialogue, in which we do not speak of truth, but help one another be better Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists? My answer is no. For this would be yet another form

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of the complete lack of belief. Under the pretext of fostering the best in another, we would fail to take both ourselves and the other seriously and would end up renouncing truth. The answer, I think, is that mission and dialogue must no longer be antitheses, but must penetrate each other. Dialogue is not random conversation, but aims at persuasion, at discovering the truth. Otherwise it is worthless. Conversely, future missionaries can no longer presuppose that they are telling someone hitherto devoid of any knowledge of God what he has to believe in. This situation may in fact occur and perhaps will occur with increasing frequency in a world that in many places is becoming atheistic. But among the religions we encounter people who through their religion have heard of God and try to live in relation to him. Preaching must therefore become a dialogical event. We are not saying something completely unknown to the other, but disclosing the hidden depth of what he already touches in his own belief. And, conversely, the preacher is not simply a giver, but also a receiver. In this sense, what Nicholas of Cusa expressed as a wish and a hope in his vision of the heavenly council should take place in interreligious dialogue. It should increasingly become a listening to the Logos, who shows us unity in the midst of our divisions and contradictions."

■ I'm having copies made of this to send people who complain about this space being opinionated and even (gasp) polemical. From Merritt Island, Florida, a disgruntled reader writes: "FIRST THINGS is too reluctant to 'get off the fence.' The busy, ordinary person on the street does not have time for such wishywashyness. They want to visit the public square where people take positions and defend them." I confess that here in New York I almost never see people reading FT on the street.

■ In July the headlines were "Pope Moves to Silence Dissent." Dissent, one gathers from most of the stories, is a very good thing that is to be, if not encouraged, certainly not silenced. The perpetual adolescents of "ultramundane Catholicism" (Jim McFadden's phrase) did their usual shtick, rushing to talk shows and op-ed pages to thumb their noses at Big Daddy in Rome and dare him to spank them. What a weary roadshow that has become. The fact is that the Pope issued a letter which, as he says, "fills in a gap" in canon law. There has been for the last ten years a "Profession of Faith" that those who teach Catholic theology are required to affirm. The code of canon law provides, among many other things, disciplinary procedures in the case of those who violate what they swore to uphold. For some reason, such procedures had not been fully specified in connection with the "Profession of Faith." The Pope's letter merely corrects that oversight. It is an exceedingly modest step. More interesting is a longer statement issued at the same time by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith that discusses levels of authoritative teaching and the adherence they require. More on that statement in a forthcoming issue. Meanwhile, enjoy the silence.

■ Romano Guardini, who died in 1968, was one of the most prolific and influential Catholic theologians of the century. His writings on Scripture, liturgy, and the meaning of revelation earn him the tribute of Robert A. Krieg's subtitle in *Romano Guardini: A Precursor of Vatican II* (University of Notre Dame Press, 270 pp., $18 paper). In 1945, entering his twelfth year under Nazi rule, Father Guardini wrote this: "Truth is a power, however, only when one requires of it no immediate effect, but has patience and figures on a long wait. Still better, when one does not in general think about its effects but wants to present truth for its own sake, for its holy, divine greatness. . . . As already said, one must have patience. Here months may mean nothing and also years. And one must have no specific aims. Somehow, lack of an agenda is the greatest power. Sometimes, especially in recent years, I had the sense that truth was standing as a reality in the room." I would like to think that truth is hanging around here somewhere, but I know I take solace from what he says about the lack of an agenda.

■ A hero of our times is Michael Bourdeaux, an Anglican priest and the founder of Keston College in England. For many years, he and Keston courageously tracked the course of religion under the evil empire, giving sustenance to brave believers, and warding off the attacks of those in the West who accused him of being an anti-Communist (a term of opprobrium at the time) and imperiling "peaceful coexistence." He exhibits indomitable amiability as he continues to press for full religious freedom in Russia and elsewhere. We had lunch a while back, and he gave me a copy of his book *Gorbachev, Glasnost, and the Gospel.* At the time he wrote the book Gorbachev and glasnost was the hottest topic around; by the time the book was published the empire had collapsed and Gorbachev was yesterday's news. Too bad for the book, for it is still a marvelously useful guide to the religious, cultural, and political currents in Russia. The debates that preceded the collapse also have everything to do with what is happening in Cuba with the increasing public role of the Church. There was in Russia, for instance, the discussion of whether it was right to allow believers to help out in elementary aspects of social care where the Soviet state had so abysmally failed. In 1988 Konstantin Kharachev addressed the leaders of one of Moscow's ideological institutes. "He asked whether it was right, in this great socialist society, to allow a man's dying vision to be of a believer bringing him a bedpan. Should he go to his

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grave in the realization that our socialist state is incapable of organizing someone to bring him this relief?" Under Gorbachev, a new word was gaining currency in Russia, *miloserdiye*. Actually, it is a very old word that is literally translated "dear-heartedness." It is the biblical word for "mercy," *kharis* in Greek, *caritas* in Latin, and, of course, "charity" in English. For seventy years, its use had been prohibited. Soviet dictionaries that included *miloserdiye* accompanied it with the explanation "obsolete." And the greatest of these is love. All the principalities and powers to the contrary, it will always be that way.

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Sources: Interview with Jacques Derrida, *New York Times*, May 30, 1998. Albert Lindemann's *Vienna and the Jews* reviewed by Steven Beller in *Times Literary Supplement*, March 6, 1998. On Terrence McNally's play *Corpus Christi*: Catholic League press release, July 1, 1998; *Guardian*, June 5, 1998; *New York Times*, May 29, 1998. Editorials on school choice, *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times*, June 12, 1998.

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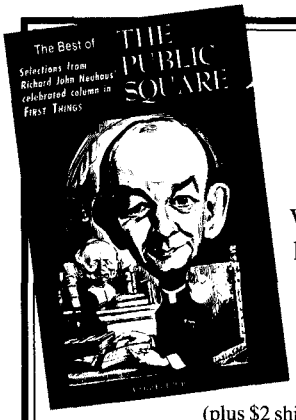

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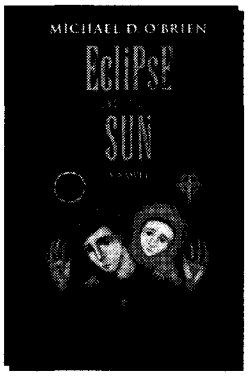

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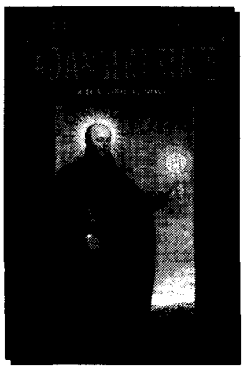

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